

Patient Information about Migraines

<http://www.neurologychannel.com/patient-information-migraines/index.shtml>

Migraines are severe headaches that often cause nausea, sleep problems, and sensitivity to light, sound, and smells. Some migraine headaches occur with aura, which is a visual experience that can include lights, wavy images, and hallucinations, and may result in dizziness, tingling, and numbness. Migraines also can cause pain in the jaw, neck, eyes, or abdomen.

Migraine headaches occur when blood vessels in the head dilate (i.e., widen or expand), but doctors are not sure why this dilation occurs. Several conditions can trigger migraine, including food and alcohol sensitivities, weather changes, glare, stress, emotional situations, hunger, thirst, and lack of sleep. Migraine treatment may involve medications and lifestyle adjustments that eliminate individual triggers.

Here are some questions to ask your doctor (e.g., neurologist) about migraine headaches. **Print this page**, check off the questions that concern you, and take it with you to your next doctor's appointment. Learning more about migraines can help you and your doctor identify your migraine triggers and develop a treatment plan to help prevent migraine headache.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Migraine Headaches

- What causes migraine headaches? What might cause blood vessels in the head to dilate?
- Why do you suspect my headaches are migraines and not tension headaches or cluster headaches?
- Do you recommend that I have any further diagnostic testing, such as neurological tests?
- If so, what do these tests involve? How should I prepare for these tests?
- When can I expect the test results? Date:
- Should I call for the results or will someone contact me?
Telephone number to call:
- Who will explain these test results to me?
- What types of migraine headache treatment options are available?
- Should I try over-the-counter headache medications first?

- What prescription medications might work for me?
- Why do you recommend these medications?
- Might I need to take a combination of migraine medicines?
- Might these medications interact with other over-the-counter and prescription medications or dietary supplements?
- How should I take my headache medicine?
- What side effects are associated with this medication?
- What should I do if I experience severe side effects?
Telephone number to call:
- What are rebound headaches?
- What should I do if I experience rebound headaches?
- Do you recommend that I keep a migraine journal? If so, what does this involve?
- How can I identify my migraine triggers?
- How can weather or altitude changes trigger migraines?
- Can you recommend any stress management techniques or ways to improve sleep?
- What types of naturopathic migraine treatments might be helpful?
- Should I change my diet in any way?
- Do you recommend that I conduct an elimination/challenge to determine if any food groups are migraine triggers for me?
- Do you recommend that I take vitamin supplements or other nutritional supplements, such as wobenzyme or magnesium citrate, to control my headaches? Why or why not?

- What is acupressure? Might this treatment be helpful?
- How do I find a reputable, trained acupressure therapist?
- Could my migraines be triggered by a spinal misalignment? If so, should I see a chiropractor?
- Do I have a low-grade magnesium deficiency? If so, do I need intravenous magnesium?
- What are biofeedback and electrical nerve stimulation? Might these treatments be helpful?
- Should I try acupuncture to treat my migraine headaches? If so, how do I find a licensed acupuncture practitioner?
- Might I need to be hospitalized for migraine headache? What does inpatient medical care for migraines involve?
- Do you recommend that I participate in a migraine headache clinical trial? Why or why not?
- Can you recommend any support groups for people with migraines or sources for additional information about migraine headaches?

Notes/Additional Information