



HEADACHE

Q. What is a headache? What is a migraine?

A. During a headache, several areas of the head can hurt, including a network of nerves which extends over the scalp and certain nerves in the face, mouth, and throat. Also sensitive to pain, because they contain delicate nerve fibers, are the muscles of the head and blood vessels found along the surface and at the base of the brain. The ends of these pain-sensitive nerves can be stimulated by stress, muscular tension, dilated blood vessels, and other triggers of headache.

There are many types of headaches, some more severe than others and requiring medical attention. Headaches are often symptoms of other diseases. One fairly common but very painful headache is a migraine. This type of ache, part of the category of vascular headaches, is usually characterized by severe pain on one or both sides of the head, nausea/vomiting, and at times disturbed vision. There are two types of migraines. The common migraine--a term that reflects the disorder's greater occurrence in the general population--is not preceded by an aura like the classic migraine. But some people experience a variety of vague symptoms beforehand, including mental fuzziness, mood changes, fatigue, and unusual retention of fluids. During the headache phase of a common migraine, a person may have diarrhea and increased urination, as well as nausea and vomiting. Common migraine pain can last 3 or 4 days.

Q. Who gets migraines? How do they differ from regular headaches?

A. Although males and females seem to be equally affected by migraine, the condition is more common in adult women than in men. Both sexes may develop migraine in infancy, but most often the disorder begins between the ages of 5 and 35.

The relationship between female hormones and migraine is still unclear. Women may have "menstrual migraine"--headaches around the time of their menstrual period--which may disappear during pregnancy. Other women develop migraine for the first time when they are pregnant. Some are first affected after menopause.

The effect of oral contraceptives on headaches is perplexing. Scientists report that some women with a history of migraine headaches who take birth control pills experience more frequent and severe attacks. However, a small percentage of women have fewer and less severe migraine headaches when they take birth control pills. And normal women who do not suffer from headaches may develop migraines as a side effect when they use oral contraceptives. Investigators around the world are studying hormonal changes in migrainous women in the hope of identifying the specific ways these naturally occurring chemicals cause headaches.

Q. What's the best way to get rid of a headache?

A. Treating a headache varies with the type and frequency; a chronic headache may be treated for symptoms but should not be ignored because it may indicate other underlying causes. Drug therapy, biofeedback training, stress reduction, and elimination of certain foods from the diet are the most common methods of preventing and controlling migraine and other vascular headaches. Regular exercise, such as swimming or vigorous walking, can also reduce the frequency and severity of migraine headaches. During a migraine headache, temporary relief can sometimes be obtained by using cold packs.

There are two ways to approach the treatment of migraine headache with drugs: prevent the attacks, or relieve symptoms after the headache occurs. For the frequent migraine, drugs can be taken at the first sign of a headache in order to stop it or to at least ease the pain. People who get occasional mild migraine may benefit by taking aspirin or acetaminophen at the start of an attack. Aspirin raises a person's tolerance to pain and also discourages clumping of blood platelets. Small amounts of caffeine may be useful if taken in the early stages of migraine. But for most migraine sufferers who get moderate to severe headaches, stronger drugs may be necessary to control the pain.

This Diet Plan May Be Helpful For Migraine Headache:

FOODS	FOODS ALLOWED	FOODS TO AVOID
Beverages	Decaffeinated coffee, fruit juices, club soda, non-cola sodas: 7-up, ginger ale	Caffeine sources - coffee, tea, cola-type soda, in excess of 2 cups, alcohol beverages
Meat, Fish, Poultry	Fresh or Frozen - turkey, chicken, fish, beef, lamb, veal, pork, egg as meat substitute (limit 3 eggs/week), tuna, tuna salad	Aged, canned, cured, or processed meats, canned or aged ham; pickled herring; salted dried fish; chicken liver; aged game; hot dogs; fermented sausage (no nitrates or nitrites); bologna, salami, pepperoni, summer sausage; peanuts and peanut butter, any meat prepared with meat tenderizer, soy sauce, or yeast extracts
Dairy	Milk: 2%, 1%, or skim, Cheese - American, cottage, ricotta, cream cheese, velveeta, yogurt limit=1/2 cup	Cultured dairy products such as buttermilk, sour cream, chocolate milk, cheese - bleu, brick, brie types, cheddar, swiss, gouda, mozzarella, parmesan, provolone, romano
Breads and Cereals	Commercial breads - white, whole wheat, rye, french, italian, english muffin, melba toast, crackers, bagel All hot and dry cereals - cream of wheat, oatmeal, puffed wheat, all-bran	Hot, fresh homemade yeast breads, breads and crackers with cheese, fresh yeast, coffee cake, doughnuts, sourdough breads, any containing chocolate or nuts
Starches	White potato, sweet potato, rice, macaroni, spaghetti, noodles	
Vegetables	Asparagus, string beans, beets, carrots, spinach, pumpkin, tomatoes, squash, corn, zucchini, broccoli, green lettuce, all except those to avoid	Pole or broad beans, lima or italian beans, lentils, snow peas, fava beans, navy beans, pinto beans, pea pods, sauerkraut, garbanzo beans, onions, olives, pickles
Fruits	Any juice, prune, apple, applesauce, cherries, apricots, peaches, pears, fruit cocktail. Limit intake to 1/2 cup: orange, grapefruit, tangerine, pineapple, lemon, lime	Avocados, banana (1/2 allowed a day) figs, raisins, papaya, passion fruit, red plums Nuts and seeds: peanut butter, sunflower, sesame, pumpkin seeds and peanuts
Soups	Cream soups made from foods allowed, homemade broths	Canned soups: Soup cubes, bouillon cubes, soups bases with autolyzed yeast or MSG
Desserts	Fruit listed above, sherbets, ice cream, cakes and cookies made without chocolate or yeast, jello	Chocolate type: ice cream, pudding, cookies, cakes. Mincemeat pies
Sweets	Sugar, jelly, jam, honey, hard candy	Chocolate candies, chocolate syrup, carob
Miscellaneous	Salt in moderation, lemon juices, butter or margarine, cooking oils, whipped cream, white vinegar and commercial salad dressing in small amounts	Pizza, cheese sauce, soy sauce, MSG, monosodium glutamate, yeast, yeast extracts, Brewer's yeast, meat tenderizers, seasoned salt. Macaroni and cheese, beef stroganoff, cheese blintzes, lasagna, frozen TV dinners. Any pickled, preserved, or

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