

Living with Migraines

LIVING WITH MIGRAINE

Migraine refers to a group of symptoms that may occur together. The most common of these symptoms is headache. Other symptoms include nausea and sensitivity to light and noise. Occurrences of migraines may be strongly affected by outside factors such as diet, stress, and change of sleep patterns. Migraines hate a consistent lifestyle.

You may experience a migraine headache even though you are taking good care of yourself. There are some things you can do that have the potential to reduce the number of migraines you get and to help keep the ones you do have from being as bad.

DIET

- Avoid alcoholic beverages. Red wine seems to be the worst offender, but any alcoholic drink can cause a migraine.
- Avoid monosodium glutamate (MSG). It may be found in mixed spices such as "seasoned salt" (bouillon cubes), and ramen noodles.
- Avoid nitrates and nitrites, which are contained in preserved meats such as bacon, hotdogs or deli meat.
- If you use caffeinated foods, spread caffeine intake evenly throughout the day. For example, have coffee three times daily, with meals, rather than three cups in the morning. Be aware that black tea and chocolate also contain caffeine-related chemicals, so be careful of your chocolate intake as well.

LIFESTYLE

- Don't skip meals. If you don't have time for a full meal, at least have a snack of fruit, fruit juice or a breakfast bar.
- Keep a regular sleep pattern. Both less sleep and more sleep than usual can cause a migraine.
- Exercise regularly — try to exercise at least every other day. Find an activity you enjoy (such as walking, biking or swimming). Exercise hard enough to get your heart rate up for 20 minutes or longer.

BEHAVIOR

- Pace your activities. Know what has to be done today and what can wait until tomorrow.
- Set aside a 20-minute relaxation break daily. Sit quietly with eyes closed, let your muscles relax and give your mind a break from the normal stress of daily life.
- Learn some "mini relaxation" techniques to use when you don't have time for a full 20-minute relaxation break. Health Education, here at Health & Wellness can provide you with ways to perform these mini relaxation exercises.

Learn to look for the warning signs that tell you that a headache is coming, such as cold hands, tightness in your neck and shoulders, tightly clenched jaw, and pressure in your temples. When you notice any of these signs, do something different such as take a relaxation break or stretch out to try to prevent the headache.

WEB SITE REFERENCES

www.migrainehelp.com/understand/triggers.html
www.ama-assn.org/special/migraine/support/educate/types.htm



CONTACT HEALTH & WELLNESS IMMEDIATELY IF ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS OCCUR OR IF YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS.



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