



CARING FOR YOUR HEADACHE DISORDER INTEGRATIVE TREATMENTS FOR MIGRAINE PREVENTION

Our mission is to improve the lives of migraine patients and their families and ultimately help find a cure.

Some patients have nausea, dizziness, light and sound sensitivity, difficulty with sleep and concentration with or without head pain, mood changes, fatigue, and neck and shoulder pain.

Listed below are some ideas that have helped others manage these symptoms without medicine. If you have symptoms first thing in the morning, keep these things by your bed and give them a little time to work before getting up. To get started with any of these suggestions, ask your medical provider!

Nausea

Try ginger, lemon or peppermint by itself, as a tea, in candy, in a food or carbonated beverages. Sea bands are bracelets that gently compress acupressure points thought to relieve nausea. Eat dry starchy foods like toast, cereal, and salted crackers when nausea starts and throughout the day. Avoid liquids with meals or drinking a lot at once. Eat frequent, small healthy meals or snacks. Decrease sugar, meat, and junk food and increase whole grains, seeds and nuts. Try eating more bananas, apples, spicy foods, or broth soups. Chamomile tea has been historically used to settle an upset stomach. Acupuncture, aromatherapy with ginger or peppermint, and homeopathy are sometimes used.

Dizziness

Increase drinks without caffeine like water with electrolytes, sports drinks, water with juice, coconut or cactus water. Eat salty foods as long as you have first discussed this with your health provider. Wear compression socks or stockings. These are designed to increase circulation and prevent dizziness. They can be purchased at most pharmacies. Ask your provider if there are exercise programs for dizziness that are right for you. Raise the head of the bed.

Light and Sound Sensitivity

Wear sunglasses with polarized lenses during times of severe light sensitivity, but not all of the time. Headphones or ear plugs may also allow you to rest and relax during an attack. Try changing the settings on your computer and devices to dim the light and increase the font.

Sleep Problems

The most important steps to improving sleep are to use good sleep hygiene practices (e.g. use the bed only for sleep, keep the room dark, no electronics in bed, 20-30 minutes of relaxation prior to bedtime, etc.). Ask your provider about trying light therapy to help reset the sleep-wake cycle. There are hot teas without caffeine intended to help with sleep (e.g. sleepy time). Use aromatherapy with lavender body oil, lotion, bath salts, room freshener, or pillow spray 20 minutes before bedtime. Try a white noise machine, a fan, or a phone app with relaxing sounds or meditation.

Eat foods that promote sleep, including whole grains (oatmeal), lean meat (turkey), and good fats (nuts). Keep it cool in the room. Our body heats up to naturally wake us up in the morning. Use skills like deep breathing, breath counting, progressive muscle relaxation, body scans, and relaxation positions to promote sleep.

Concentration Problems

Increase healthy fats like avocado, coconut oil, olive oil, nuts, seeds, salmon, and other fish in your diet. Record and play back school lectures at home. Ask the school if audio versions of the textbooks are available. Exercise until you sweat a few times per week, and stay active doing things you love daily. Use mindfulness practices daily and throughout the day such as: mindful coloring books, sitting meditation, walking meditation, mindful breathing, mindful eating, and mindful exercise or chores. Mindful movement practices such as Yoga, Tai Chi or Qigong can also increase cognitive functioning when done regularly.

Mood Changes

Avoid caffeine, sugar, white flour carbohydrates, and junk/fast foods with unhealthy fats.

Increase healthy fats and a “rainbow” of fruits and vegetables in your diet. Learn how to make foods that you love in healthy ways (i.e., black bean brownies). Make exercise fun by doing something different each day for at least 20-30 minutes (a sport, bike, trampoline, jump rope, or hiking). Increase foods containing B-vitamins. Spend at least 15-20 minutes outside (preferably in nature). Get involved in a group where you share common interests (sports, club, etc.). Find ways to help others (volunteer, tutor a classmate, simple acts of kindness). Start an art project, craft, or listen/play music. Spend time connecting with others, in nature, or with animals (pet). Consider trying yoga poses that contain a backbend or “heart opener,” such as: cobra, cat/cow, bridge or wheel to help improve mood. Choose positive sources of entertainment or news.

Daytime Fatigue

Exercise daily and stay moving, but do not reach the point of exhaustion. Yoga poses that involve continuous flowing movement, like sun salutations. Avoid daytime napping. Increase healthy fats in the diet including: avocados, coconut oil, olive oil, nuts, seeds, salmon, and other fish. Eat frequent small meals with whole grains. Avoid processed, high sugar and fast foods. Eat “the rainbow” in vegetables and fruits and drink plenty of fluids.

Neck and Shoulder Pain

Check your posture throughout the day by setting alarms, using an app reminder, or place reminder stickers around where you will see them. Try to stay straight! Use proper computer or work space set up while doing homework to maintain healthy spinal alignment and prevent compression or muscle fatigue. Avoid sitting for long periods of time by taking walks or stretch breaks about every 20 minutes. Stretch often by relaxing the shoulders down and back. Try the Thera Cane trigger point massager. Drink plenty of water, stay active, and sleep well. Ask your provider if other types of massage or physical therapy could help. Physical therapists use massage, hot and cold packs, TENS units, and individualized exercises. Ask your provider if other body based therapies like chiropractic or osteopathic manipulation is safe for you to try.

Also ask your provider if trigger point injections are right for you. Some patients find a lot of relief with gels, lotions, and patches. Some examples of these include: tiger balm, icy hot, topricin, arnica, capsaicin, and lidocaine. Some people are allergic to these. Make sure to test the product on a small area of skin first.