



CARING FOR YOUR HEADACHE DISORDER HEALTHY HABITS TO PREVENT HEADACHE DISORDERS

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

A healthy lifestyle is an important element in the management of Migraine.

Eat regularly: Skipping meals, fasting, and low blood sugar can trigger Migraine. If you're unable to follow a normal eating schedule, pack snacks.

Get enough sleep

- Aim for 8-10 hours every night.
- Go to sleep and get up at the same time each day. You may stay up and sleep in one hour later on the weekend, but no more.
- Develop a bedtime routine that helps you to relax before you climb into bed (use relaxation strategies (take a warm bath, read, eat a light snack, etc)
- Do not watch TV or have a computer in the bedroom. Do not read or do homework in bed. You need to teach your body that bed is for sleep so that it learns to fall asleep when you get into bed.
- If you are still awake after 20 minutes, get up out of bed, do something non-stimulating, then return to bed.
- If you are going to bed early and not falling asleep until very late on a regular basis, it can be helpful to move your bedtime earlier by 15 minutes every few days to get in a better pattern.
- Do not take naps.
- Do not exercise or eat heavy meals before bed; limit liquid intake.
- If you lie awake worrying, keep a pen and paper by your bed to write things down, then give yourself permission to stop worrying.

Drink more fluids: Dehydration can trigger Migraine attacks.

- Your doctor will tell you how much fluid is right for you.
- Carry a water bottle with you. If necessary, your primary care provider can write a letter to your school to allow you to carry a water bottle.
- Avoid drinks with caffeine.

Eat foods that help prevent Migraine attacks. There are a few vitamins that can help to prevent Migraine attacks. You can get these in your diet by eating the following every day:

- Dark green vegetables
- Whole grains
- Vitamin-D fortified milk or soymilk (at least 2 glasses per day)
- Lean meat (especially organ meats like liver) or fish

Watch out for foods that can trigger Migraine attacks: Food triggers do not necessarily contribute to Migraine in all individuals, and particular foods may trigger attacks in certain people only on occasion. Be your own expert by keeping a journal of foods you have eaten before a migraine attack and see whether the removal or reduction of certain foods from your diet improves your Migraine attacks.

Specific foods to watch out for:

- Caffeine withdrawal –avoid caffeinated soda, iced tea, coffee, energy drinks, and chocolate.
- MSG – this is a common food additive in Chinese, canned, and frozen foods. Read labels – it can also be called yeast extract, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, automated yeast, sodium caseinate, and texturized protein.
- Alcohol
- Sugar substitutes: Aspartame (Nutra-sweet) & Sucralose (Splenda)
- Aged cheese: any cheese with a strong smell including cheddar.
 - American, cottage, and cream cheese are ok.
- Cured and preserved meats: hot dogs, bacon, lunch meats, beef jerky
- Peanut butter, peanuts, nuts
- Fermented foods: Yogurt, pickles, vinegar, sour cream

Exercise

- Exercise triggers your body to release anti-pain chemicals. You will sleep better, have less stress, and have overall better health.
- Exercise to the point of sweating for at least 30 minutes three times per week.
- If your pain increases with activity, don't push yourself too much, too fast. Increase the intensity slowly so that your body gets used to it and drink lots of fluid before you start exercising.

Identify and reduce stress

- Think carefully about home, school, and social life. Know that good stress (like preparing for a party) and stress let-down (crashing after a big event) can also be triggers for Migraine attacks.
- If you notice stress bringing on a Migraine, take a break. Step out of the situation or close your eyes and take a few deep breaths.
- People with anxiety and depression often have Migraine attacks.
- Speak with your health care provider if you need help with reducing stress, or if you think you are anxious or depressed.

Keep a diary to figure out your triggers:

- Keeping a headache diary is the best way to recognize what triggers your Migraine.
- Put a blank calendar in an obvious place (by your toothbrush, on the refrigerator) or use your school day planner.

Keep track of:

- Headache attacks (put a lowercase h for mild headache attacks and capital H for severe headache attacks)
- medicines (acute medicines and times when you change doses of preventive medicines)
- things you think might be triggers (changes in sleep schedule, foods, your menstrual cycle- write a P on the first day of your period)