

TIPS

for Coping With Migraine

Many people think migraine is just an excruciating headache, but migraine is more serious. Migraine is a chronic neurologic condition that requires a proper diagnosis from your doctor. The following tips may help you better cope with migraine.

Understand how migraine is diagnosed. Migraine is diagnosed by its pain and number of attacks. Beyond head pain, other associated symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, and sensitivity to light and sound.

Practice strategies to alleviate migraine. Stress management strategies such as exercise, biofeedback mechanisms, and other therapies designed to limit daily discomfort may reduce the frequency and severity of migraine.

Keep a migraine diary. A migraine diary can help you and your doctor determine the cause and patterns of your migraine. Diary entries should include the date and time of the headache, foods you have eaten, medications you took, and activities you participated in.

Stick to a routine. Eat meals and snacks around the same times each day. Also, establish regular sleep and wake times, and remember to follow this schedule. If you take naps during the day, keep them short because naps that last longer than 20 to 30 minutes may interfere with nighttime sleep.

Maintain your healthy weight. A weight loss program is recommended for obese people with migraine. Although obesity may not cause migraines, it has been found to promote the frequency of attacks.

Use temperature therapy. Apply hot or cold compresses to your neck or head. Ice packs have a numbing effect, which may dull the sensation of pain. Hot packs and heating pads may relax tense muscles.

Avoid migraine triggers. Certain foods and alcoholic beverages can trigger migraine. These foods include aged cheese and other tyramine-containing foods, food additives such as nitrates, and cold foods. Red wine, beer, whiskey, and champagne also should be avoided if you have migraine.

Incorporate relaxation techniques. Make time for doing things you enjoy. This may include listening to music, dancing, playing a sport, reading a book, or playing with your pet. Also, set aside time to practice relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga, tai chi, and deep breathing.

This page is part of an ongoing series of practical tips for patients with neurologic disorders. If you have compiled clinically relevant tips that you wish to share, please contact the editor at info@neurologyreviews.com.

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