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Is it migraine that's troubling you?

Migraine headaches are one of the leading medical complaints prevalent worldwide, and is also an important cause for temporary disability and significant work hours lost. There is a myth amongst people that Migraines are non treatable, which is not true. Know from our expert some important information about migraine.



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“With migraines, one of the best things you can do is learn your personal triggers that can bring on the pain. The first step is to track your migraines in a diary. Note what you were doing before and when your headache started. What were you eating? How much sleep did you get the night before? Did anything stressful or important happen that day? These are key clues. Good stress free lifestyle with regular sleep, timely and health eating habits and regular exercises can prevent migraine attacks.”

Migraine attacks can cause significant pain for hours to days and can be so severe that the pain is disabling.

It is usually seen that people go on taking over the counter painkillers for migraine attacks. This leads to another complication known as medicine overuse headaches (MOH). However, not treating migraines the proper way may lead to chronic daily migraines. Also, continuously taking painkillers for migraine headaches may damage kidney and stomach.

Migraine have a strong genetic predisposition but many suffer because of certain triggers as mentioned below:

- ▲ Hormonal changes in women - Fluctuations in estrogen seem to trigger headaches in many women.
- ▲ Foods such as aged cheeses, salty foods, processed foods & food additives
- ▲ Alcohol caffeinated drinks
- ▲ Sensory stimuli due to bright lights, sun glare, loud sounds & strong smells.
- ▲ Changes in wake-sleep pattern
- ▲ Changes in the environment

Symptoms

Migraines often begin in childhood, adolescence or early adulthood. It may progress through four stages: prodrome, aura, attack and post-drome.

Prodrome

One or two days before a migraine, you may notice:

- ▲ Constipation
- ▲ Mood changes, from depression to euphoria
- ▲ Food cravings
- ▲ Neck stiffness
- ▲ Increased thirst and urination
- ▲ Frequent yawning

Aura

Aura, though rare, may occur before or during migraines. Most people experience migraines without aura. Each of these symptoms usually begins gradually, builds up over several minutes and lasts for 20 to 60 minutes.

- ▲ Visual phenomena, such as seeing various shapes, bright spots or flashes of light
- ▲ Vision loss
- ▲ Pins and needles sensations in an arm or leg
- ▲ Weakness or numbness in the face or one side of the body
- ▲ Difficulty in speaking
- ▲ Hearing noises or music
- ▲ Uncontrollable jerking or other movements

Attack

A migraine usually lasts from 4 to 72 hours if untreated.

- ▲ Pain on one side or both sides of your head
- ▲ Pain that feels throbbing or pulsing
- ▲ Sensitivity to light, sounds, and sometimes smells and touch
- ▲ Nausea and vomiting
- ▲ Blurred vision
- ▲ Lightheadedness, sometimes followed by fainting

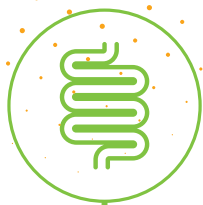
Post-drome

Post-drome is not commonly seen in all cases but may occur after a migraine attack. You may feel drained and washed out, while some people feel elated.

- ▲ Confusion
- ▲ Moodiness
- ▲ Dizziness
- ▲ Weakness
- ▲ Sensitivity to light and sound

See your doctor immediately if you have any of the following:

- ▲ An abrupt, severe headache like a thunderclap
- ▲ Headache with fever, stiff neck, mental confusion, seizures, double vision, weakness, numbness or trouble speaking
- ▲ Headache after a head injury, especially if the headache gets worse
- ▲ A chronic headache that is worse after coughing, exertion, straining or a sudden movement
- ▲ New headache pain if you're older than 50



Bleeding Piles: Prevention is the key

The veins around your anus tend to stretch under pressure and may bulge or swell. Swollen veins (hemorrhoids) can develop from increased pressure in the lower rectum due to straining during bowel movements or from the increased pressure on these veins during pregnancy.



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"Don't skip meals. Eating balanced, regularly scheduled meals promote regular bowel function. Try to get 30 min more of exercise, such as walking on most days of the week."

If you have piles, you may notice:

- ✦ Painless bleeding during bowel movements - you might notice small amounts of bright red blood on your toilet tissue or in the toilet
- ✦ Itching or irritation in your anal region
- ✦ Pain or discomfort
- ✦ Swelling around your anus
- ✦ A lump near your anus, which may be sensitive or painful (may be a thrombosed hemorrhoid)
- ✦ Straining during bowel movements
- ✦ Sitting for long periods of time on the toilet
- ✦ Chronic diarrhea or constipation
- ✦ Obesity
- ✦ Pregnancy
- ✦ Anal intercourse
- ✦ Low-fiber diet

Prevention

The best way to prevent hemorrhoids is to keep your stools soft, so they pass easily. To prevent hemorrhoids and reduce symptoms of hemorrhoids, follow these tips:

- ✦ Eat high-fiber foods & drink plenty of fluids.
- ✦ Consider fiber supplements. Most people don't get enough of the recommended amount of fiber — 25 grams a day for women and 38 grams a day for men — in their diet. Studies have shown that over-the-counter fiber supplements, such as Metamucil and Citrucel, improve overall symptoms and bleeding from hemorrhoids. These products help keep stools soft and regular.
- ✦ If you use fiber supplements, be sure to drink at least eight glasses of water or other fluids every day. Otherwise, the supplements can cause constipation or make constipation worse.
- ✦ Don't strain. Straining and holding your breath when trying to pass a stool creates greater pressure in the veins in the lower rectum.
- ✦ Go as soon as you feel the urge. If you wait to pass a bowel movement and the

urge goes away, your stool could become dry and be harder to pass.

- ✦ Exercise. Stay active to help prevent constipation and to reduce pressure on veins, which can occur with long periods of standing or sitting. Exercise can also help you lose excess weight that may be contributing to your hemorrhoids.
- ✦ Avoid long periods of sitting. Sitting too long, particularly on the toilet, can increase the pressure on the veins in the anus.

Self Management

You can often relieve the mild pain, swelling and inflammation of hemorrhoids with home treatments. Often these are the only treatments needed.

- ✦ Eat high-fiber foods - Eat more fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Doing this will soften the stool and increases its bulk, which will help you avoid the straining that can worsen symptoms from existing hemorrhoids.
- ✦ Use topical treatments - Apply an over-the-counter hemorrhoid cream or suppository containing hydrocortisone, or use pads containing witch hazel or a numbing agent.
- ✦ Soak regularly in a warm bath or sitz bath.
- ✦ Keep the anal area clean & dry. Gently pat the area dry or use a hair dryer.
- ✦ Don't use dry toilet paper - To help keep the anal area clean after a bowel movement, use moist towelettes or wet toilet paper that doesn't contain perfume or alcohol.
- ✦ Apply cold - Apply ice packs or cold compresses on your anus to relieve swelling.
- ✦ Take oral pain relievers for pain relief.
- ✦ It is always desirable to get checked by a specialist to rule out other causes of bleeding per rectum before you start self management. Bleeding per rectum can also be caused by various reasons such as rectal cancer, ulcerative colitis, anal fissure etc. and a specialist examination is must to rule out any of these causes.



Getting the most from a visit to your doctor



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"Keep a list of your medications and doses readily available in your purse or wallet. Whether you're taking a prescription drug or one you buy over-the-counter, don't hesitate to ask your doctor or pharmacist questions such as the name of medication, why you should take it and what side effects you can expect. Also know if you should follow any restrictions and what you should do in case you miss a dose. Asking questions help you understand your ailment better everytime. "

A lot is being said about doctors and their medical practice. But little do we know about our rights and responsibilities as a patient. The guide below will ensure that you make the best use of the short time you have for your appointment and also ensure that no miscommunication should hamper your way to recovery.

Arrive on time

Promptness helps ensure an unhurried visit.

Know your own and your family's medical history

Your previous medical conditions and those of blood-related family members are important. Be prepared to discuss them in detail with your doctor.

Bring someone along if you feel comfortable

Someone else may help think of additional questions or help you understand instructions.

Bring a list of concerns

Once you're in the doctor's office, it's easy to forget health issues you want to discuss. A list may jog your memory, but keep it brief. Include only issues of primary concern.

Bring your medications

Show your doctor all your medications in their original bottles so that your doctor can see the dosage and types of drugs. Also bring in or make a list of any vitamins, herbal products, dietary supplements and over-the-counter medications you use.

Answer questions accurately and completely

Your doctor needs facts on which to base an accurate diagnosis and treatment plan.

Speak up

If you have questions or doubts about your diagnosis or treatment, express them. For example, your doctor can explain the benefits of a medication, its possible side

effects and how long it will take to work. Don't leave until your questions are addressed and resolved.

Following your doctor's advice

To get the most from your appointment, make sure you understand and can use your doctor's advice when you get home.

Request for written instructions

Request your doctor to list the main points as you discuss or request brochures, videos or websites about the topics you discuss.

Know your prescription

Ask why this drug is best. Find out what you can expect from it, including side effects and how to take it correctly.

Expect explanations

Be sure you know why a test is ordered, what it will involve, what the risks are, and how and when you'll know the results.

Repeat what you hear

This process allows your doctor to identify any instructions that aren't clear.

Solve problems together

If you don't think it's realistic to follow your doctor's recommendations, speak up. For example, financial restraints might keep you from buying a certain medication. Your doctor may know of a less expensive generic medication that will work just as well.

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