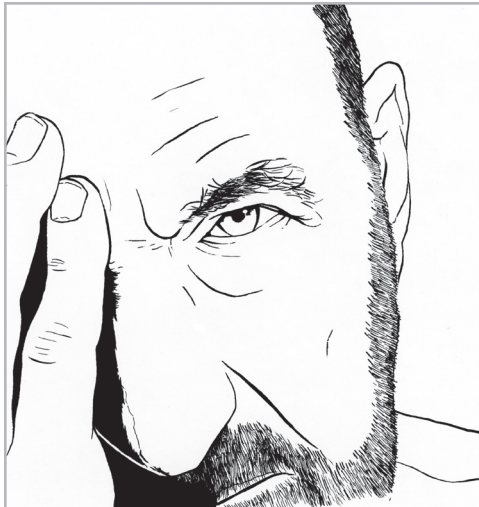


# Migraines



**A migraine is a very painful type of headache.** When you have migraines, you may also have other symptoms like nausea, vomiting and sensitivity to light and sound. Migraines can interrupt your life and keep you from daily activities.

You may be able to prevent migraines by avoiding certain triggers. There are also treatment options available to help ease migraine pain or help prevent migraines before they start.

## Symptoms

A migraine can last anywhere from 4 to 72 hours. Migraine symptoms are different for everyone. You might have migraines every day, or you may only have them twice a year. Some of the common signs are:

- **a painful throbbing or intense ache on one or both sides of your head**
- **pain that gets worse with physical activity**
- **nausea or vomiting**
- **sensitivity to noise, light or smells**
- **change in your sight, like blurry vision or blind spots**
- **feeling confused, tired or lightheaded**
- **sweating or feeling cold**
- **a tender neck or scalp**

Some people with migraines have an aura, or warning sign, right before a migraine. An aura is usually something you see like a flashing light. But it can also be a change in smell, a numbness or tingling feeling, or trouble speaking. Auras can last from 15 to 30 minutes.

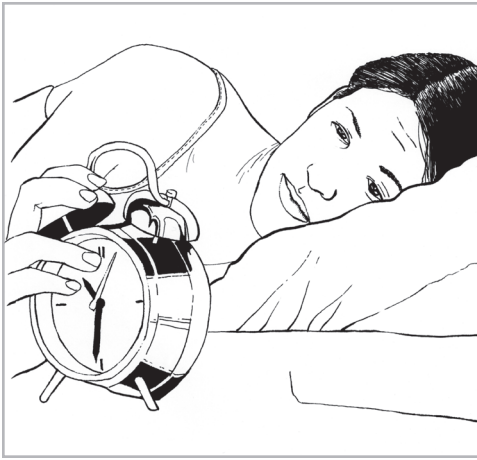
You might also experience warning signs, called premonitions, a few hours or even a day before an attack. Premonitions can be tiredness, food cravings, thirst or changes in your mood.

Talk to your doctor if you have any of these symptoms. Your doctor can help you figure out the cause of your migraines and recommend treatment.

## Migraine Triggers

Triggers can bring on a migraine or make one worse. Common triggers include:

- **anxiety, stress or depression**
- **missing meals**
- **changes to your normal sleep pattern** (too much or too little sleep)
- **red wine, or too much or too little caffeine**
- **certain foods**, especially those with sodium nitrate (like lunch meats or hot dogs), tyramine (like aged cheeses or smoked fish), MSG (in some Chinese foods), or aspartame (artificial sweetener)
- **bright lights, loud noises or strong smells**
- **smoking**
- **hormonal changes or menstrual periods** (for women)
- **intense physical activity**
- **changes in weather**



## Ease Migraine Pain

In addition to medicine, try these to help reduce pain:

- **Lie down in a quiet, dark room.**
- **Massage your head**, putting pressure on your scalp and temples.
- **Place a cold compress or cloth across your forehead.**



To learn more, visit **HealthyAdvice.com/Migraine**

You can also visit these websites:

- **American Academy of Family Physicians**  
[www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org)
- **MedlinePlus**  
[www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov)

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## Treatment

Your doctor will recommend the treatment that's best for you. There are two main types of migraine medicine, and your doctor may prescribe one or both:

- 1. Pain-relief medicines**—These help relieve migraine pain and are available by prescription and over-the-counter. It's best to take these as soon as you notice the signs of a migraine.
- 2. Preventive medicines**—These help prevent migraines. They're only available with a prescription, and you take them every day, even if you don't have symptoms. If you take pain-relief medicine more than 10 days a month, talk to your doctor about preventive medicine.

Whichever medicines you take, it's important you take them as prescribed. And discuss long-term effects and side effects with your doctor.

## How You Can Prevent Migraines

Take these steps to help prevent migraines:

- **Identify and avoid triggers**—Keep a journal of things that seem to cause or make your migraines worse. Then, avoid these triggers when possible, or work with your doctor to find ways to manage them.
- **Manage stress**—Try relaxation techniques like deep breathing, meditation, listening to music, or writing in a journal.
- **Exercise**—Pick an activity you enjoy, then aim to do 30 minutes of exercise on most days. If you're not already active, talk to your doctor before beginning an exercise program.
- **Get enough sleep**—Give yourself time to unwind before bed, and stick to a regular sleep schedule. Aim to get eight hours of sleep a night.
- **Don't smoke**—If you smoke, ask your doctor about nicotine replacement therapy, like the nicotine patch or gum. Or visit **[www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)** for tips and resources to help you quit for good.
- **Lose weight if you're overweight**—Talk to your doctor about weight-loss options. You might start by including more fruits and vegetables in your diet or only eating desserts as a once-a-week treat.

## Remember:

- Identify and avoid migraine triggers, and work with your doctor to manage them.
- Take all medicine as prescribed. Take preventive medicines even if you don't have symptoms.
- Make lifestyle changes to help prevent migraines.