

Headaches and Migraines

Headaches affect virtually everyone at one time or another. Unfortunately, despite their prevalence, migraines are still one of the most poorly understood medical disorders of our time. Preventing migraines begins by avoiding the triggers. Most often this means eating a healthy diet that's right for you.



Headaches Come in Many Forms

Naturally, there's a wide range of headaches. Compared to other types of headaches, migraines are still in the minority. Headaches, in general, may result from chemical, environmental, emotional, or physical sources, and/or any combination thereof.

They could be caused by anything from food allergies and sensitivity to scents or perfume, to emotional stress and jaw clenching, hormonal fluctuations, or a shortage of blood or oxygen to your head caused by poor posture.



In the latter case, visiting a chiropractor and learning [proper posture techniques](#) could help resolve recurring headaches. If your headache stems from tight muscles, myofascial release may be part of the answer. Electro sensitivity could also be part of the problem, so take note of *where* you are and what gadgets are nearby when symptoms strike.

Migraine headache

A migraine headache is characterized by intense throbbing or pulsing, typically in one area or side of your head, and is commonly accompanied by nausea, vomiting, and extreme sensitivity to light and sound.

Due to its profoundly debilitating nature, this may be one instance where you could justify popping a pill for instant relief. Unfortunately, migraine medications have a particularly poor efficacy rate. Most migraine drugs tend to work only 50 percent of the time, in 50 percent of people... They can also cause severe side effects, including heart attack and stroke.

Migraine Prevention Strategy #1: Avoid Common Triggers

Learning how to prevent migraines from occurring in the first place is your best bet. While there are many potential triggers (and what triggers a migraine for one might not trigger it in another), the following are some of the most commonly reported:

Food and Drink: Many people experience migraines when they eat certain foods, especially: wheat, dairy, sugar, artificial preservatives or chemical additives, cured or processed meats, alcohol (especially red wine and beer), aspartame, caffeine, and MSG. Caffeine can also trigger an attack - and sometimes excess nuts

Changes in sleeping cycle: Both missing sleep and oversleeping can trigger a migraine

Allergies: Including food allergies and food sensitivities, and chemical sensitivities

Stress/Post-stress: Any kind of emotional trauma can trigger a migraine, even after the stress has passed

External stimuli: Bright lights, fluorescent lights, loud noises and strong smells (even pleasant ones) can trigger a migraine

Hormones: Some women experience migraines before or during their periods, during pregnancy or during menopause. Others may get migraines from hormonal medications like birth control pills or hormone replacement therapy

Dehydration and/or hunger: Skipping meals or fasting are also common triggers

Physical exertion: Extremely intense exercise or even sex has been known to bring on migraines

Weather changes, and/or changes in altitude

The Diet Connection

From an anecdotal perspective, the Paleo diet has helped quite a few people rid themselves of recurring headaches, including migraines. The Paleo diet can be summarized as "any food that can be eaten without being processed." That excludes grains, bread, or pasta, and no pasteurized dairy, but does include lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, some nuts and oils along with wild caught fish, organic pastured poultry, and grass-fed meats.

In 1979 the journal *Lancet* published a study linking Migraine headaches to diet [Lancet 1979 May 5;1\(8123\):966-9](#) the study showed that migraine sufferers with food antigen immuno-reactivity experienced profound relief when put on an elimination diet.

Bio-Compatibility Testing

A Bio-Compatibility test can reveal food sensitivities that could be contributing to headaches and migraines. This test includes over 500 foods and household products and will give you the information you are looking for in one comprehensive report. This test is completely individual and can reveal food not generally excluded from an elimination diet like chicken, rice, lamb, spinach, sweet potato or table salt.



Headaches May Be Caused by Common Nutritional Deficiencies

Nutritional deficiencies can also play a major role in headaches and migraines. Ubiquinol (the reduced form of Coenzyme Q10), Vitamin D, B2 (riboflavin), B6, B12, and folic acid and magnesium have all been shown to help reduce the frequency and intensity of migraines.

[European Journal of Neurology 2004 Jul;11\(7\):475-7](#)

[Pharmacogenetics and Genomics 2009 Jun;19\(6\):422-8](#)

[Neurology 2005 Feb 22;64\(4\):713-5](#)

As you can see, your diet is really the foundational core for any long-term solution for preventing headaches and migraines. It's also foundational for optimal health in general.

You don't have to "get used to" living with headaches, or migraines there are answers.

For more information on how herbal and nutritional medicine and dietary change can help you prevent headaches and migraine contact Linda Lowen at the

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