



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life.



TIPS FOR MIGRAINE RELIEF

Without proper treatment, migraines can severely impact your quality of life and prevent you from performing daily activities. Understanding how to react to migraine symptoms and how lifestyle choices impact these attacks can help you effectively manage your headaches.

Understanding Migraines

Migraines are moderate to severe headaches that can last several hours or days. Symptoms may include throbbing or pulsing head pain, sensitivity to light, nausea and vomiting. Some people experience migraines infrequently, while others have migraine attacks multiple times a month.

Recognizing the Signs

Migraines affect people differently. Some people may notice subtle changes one or two days before migraine pain starts, such as the following:

- Neck stiffness
- Increased urination
- Frequent yawning
- Mood changes
- Constipation
- Food cravings
- Fluid retention

For others, visual phenomena and other sensations may be noticeable before or during a migraine. The following are examples:

- Pins and needles
- Vision loss

- Bright spots or flashes
- Weakness or numbness
- Difficulty speaking

While these symptoms can be frightening, reacting quickly to developing symptoms can help prevent full-blown migraine attacks.

Responding to Symptoms

Although not all migraines are preventable, there are ways to reduce the severity of an attack if you catch it early. Consider the following tips:

- **Apply temperature treatment.** Some people have success with cold compresses or ice packs on their necks and foreheads. For others, heat (e.g., warm showers and heating pads) can have a positive effect.
- **Turn off the lights.** Light and sound can worsen migraine pain. Take a break in a dark, quiet room.
- **Use pain-relieving medications.** Certain prescription and over-the-counter medications stop or lessen the symptoms of a migraine attack. Consult your physician for further guidance.

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- **Have a caffeinated drink.** Small amounts of caffeine can lessen migraine pain in the early stages. It may also enhance the effects of pain relievers. Too much caffeine can cause withdrawal headaches and trouble sleeping, so drink sparingly.

Evaluating Your Lifestyle

Lifestyle choices can contribute to the frequency and severity of your migraines. Positive lifestyle habits can promote overall health and reduce the likelihood of an attack. Consider the following strategies:

- **Manage your stress.** Reducing your stress levels can decrease migraines. By staying positive and taking time to relax throughout your day, you can improve your mental health and decrease the chances of a migraine.
- **Stay physically active.** When you exercise, your brain releases chemicals that alleviate pain. Exercising can also help reduce anxiety and depression and prevent obesity, all of which can worsen migraines. Talk to your health care provider before making any major changes to your physical activity levels.
- **Get a good night's rest.** By lessening distractions at bedtime, establishing a regular sleep pattern and avoiding substances that interfere with sleep (e.g., coffee and alcohol), you're less likely to experience migraines triggered by poor sleep.
- **Watch what you eat.** Certain foods can trigger migraines. If you think a specific food is causing your headaches (e.g., nuts and chocolate), remove it from your diet and see what happens. Eating consistently throughout the day can also help.

Managing Migraines

Frequent migraines can make you feel out of control during routine activities, but they can be managed with a combination of medicine, proactive response measures and healthy lifestyle choices.

For further guidance on how to take charge of your migraines, contact Gallagher - Bloomington today.