

Your Guide To

Fewer

Migraine Headaches



Cooper

University Health Care

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Fewer

Migraine Headaches

Migraine headaches affect more than 28 million Americans, typically between the

ages of 15 and 55. More than 70% to 80% of those who experience migraines have a family member with migraines. Women are three to four times more likely to experience migraines than men, often as a result of hormonal changes.

Those who experience migraines inherit a sensitive nervous system, and inflammation in the nerves and blood vessels may cause pain. Migraines affect everyone differently, and they may lead to both physical pain and emotional suffering.

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Cooper University Health Care Headache Program



Avoiding Triggers

The best way to decrease the frequency of migraines is to know what triggers them. Document your migraine attacks and possible triggers in your Monthly Migraine Diary. Completely avoiding all food triggers may be your best migraine prevention strategy.



Common triggers:

Caffeine (see *Avoid Caffeine* on page 4 for more information)

Certain foods and additives

- Anything containing tyramine and/or nitrites, including eggplant, potatoes, sausage, smoked meat (bacon, ham), spinach, sugar, cheese, especially aged cheese, beer, red wine, chocolate, fried food, bananas, plums, broad beans, spinach, tomatoes, and citrus fruit
- Soy products, particularly fermented ones, which can contain high tyramine levels (for example, tofu, soy sauce, teriyaki sauce, miso)
- Certain seasonings, such as MSG, which is often found in artificial additives
- Artificial sweeteners and sugar substitutes, which are found in soda, diet drinks, and energy drinks

Low blood sugar, which is brought on by hunger or too many refined carbohydrates

Food allergies and sensitivities, such as gluten sensitivity

Dehydration, which results from inadequate intake of fluids

Lack of sleep

Exposure to **bright light or certain colors of light**

Shock, stress, or worry

Exposure to **loud noise**

Certain weather conditions, such as a dry atmosphere, a warm dry wind, or changes in the weather

Close proximity to compact **fluorescent lights**

Hormonal changes, including the use of certain birth control pills

Alcohol use



Healthy Living Strategies



Exercise

An exercise regimen can be an important part of preventing migraines. Start slow and build up gradually. Pushing too hard in the beginning could trigger migraines and discourage you from continuing your exercise regimen. Exercise can help with weight loss, decrease the frequency of migraines, and improve overall health. In addition, you may find that you sleep better and have more energy.

For variety, mix up your exercises with aerobic activity, such as brisk walking, cycling, or swimming. Other options include stretching and light strengthening exercise, such as light weightlifting, sit-ups, or push-ups. Consider joining a yoga class. Plan to start by exercising for 10 to 20 minutes two to three times per week and gradually increase to 45 to 60 minutes five to seven times per week.

Neck Care

Gentle neck stretches may help to decrease the frequency of headaches over time. Go at your own pace, and stretch slowly over two to three minutes. Try to stretch twice each day, and consider stretching while watching TV or listening to music. It may take at least two weeks to see results. You can also stretch in the shower because moist heat helps mobility. A regular monthly professional neck massage also may be very therapeutic.



Stress Management

A counselor can help you to learn stress-management techniques. Consider a book, audiobook, or DVD on meditation and other relaxation techniques. You can find relaxation audio files for free download at <http://www.themeditationpodcast.com/episodes.html>. Biofeedback training is another option (see <http://www.bcia.org> for more info).



Healthy Living Strategies



Sleep Hygiene

Recommendations:

- Get up and go to bed at the same time every day, even if you are very tired in the morning or do not feel sleepy at night.
- Do not nap during the day, even if you feel tired.
- Do not try to “catch up” on lost sleep by sleeping in on weekends or days off.
- Avoid caffeine in the afternoon and evening.
- Avoid vigorous exercise or heavy meals later in the day.
- Do not drink alcohol excessively or to help you sleep.
- Follow a bedtime routine to help prepare your mind and body for sleep.
- Reserve your bed for sleeping (and sex, if you are sexually active). Do not engage in other leisure activities in bed or in your bedroom. Making this a habit will condition your mind and body to associate sleep with your bed.
- If you have trouble falling asleep, do not constantly watch the clock and worry. If you don’t fall asleep after 20 minutes, get up and do something nonstimulating for 10 to 15 minutes. Then return to bed and try again to fall asleep.

Avoid Caffeine

Some people find that drinking a cup of coffee at the first sign of an impending migraine can reduce the severity of the symptoms or stop the migraine altogether. However, regular use of caffeine, especially more than one cup per day, may worsen migraines. We recommend reducing your caffeine use gradually because sudden caffeine withdrawal can cause migraines.





Avoiding Medication Overuse



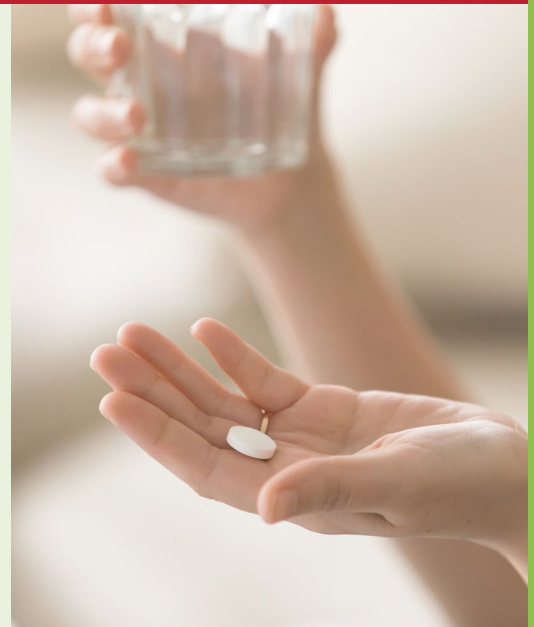
Excessive use of over-the-counter medications, such as ibuprofen or Tylenol®, or certain prescribed medications, such as Fioricet® or narcotics, may worsen headaches over time. Talk to your doctor about how to stop using these medications safely.



Natural Preventive Options

Choose one or two supplements to start. They can take two to three months to become effective. They are safe to take together and with your other medications.

- **Riboflavin (vitamin B2):** Take 400 mg in the morning or split into divided doses. Don't be alarmed if it turns urine bright yellow.
- **Magnesium oxide:** Take 200 to 400 mg in the morning to start, then over one to two weeks, gradually increase to three times a day with meals. It may cause stomach upset or diarrhea. Other options include other forms of magnesium (including citrate, gluconate, and chelated) that may be better tolerated. Magnesium citrate may cause diarrhea.





Cooper University Health Care Headache Program

Our Physicians



Loretta Mueller, DO
Headache Specialist



Larisa Syrow, MD
Headache Specialist

Cooper Offers Botox for Chronic Migraine

Botox® (botulinum toxin) is a purified protein that relaxes muscles. Botox injections are approved by the FDA for chronic migraines. "Chronic" migraines are headaches that occur for more than 15 days per month for longer than three months. Botox has a high rate of success in reducing the frequency of migraine headaches and may work even if other treatments have been unsuccessful. Many patients who have not obtained relief with other treatments have enjoyed a significant reduction in migraines after Botox injections.

Headaches vary in cause, frequency, and severity. Some people experience chronic headaches that have a significant impact on quality of life.

The Headache Program at the Cooper Neurological Institute offers comprehensive neurological evaluation and treatment for migraines, tension headaches, and other types of headaches. Combining medical expertise and a compassionate approach, we work to find the most effective treatment for each patient's unique needs.

Patients and families in the South Jersey community and beyond choose Cooper for headache treatment because of our:

- **Expertise:** At the Cooper Neurological Institute, our board-certified physicians have years of experience. Doctors in our headache program have special training in the diagnosis and treatment of many different types of headaches. You can trust that you're in excellent hands with us.
- **Team approach:** At Cooper, our team of specialists, with different areas of expertise, work together to develop treatment recommendations and provide the best possible care.
- **Innovative treatment options:** Our doctors are trained in the latest treatments for headaches and migraines, including Botox® (botulinum toxin). The FDA has approved Botox to prevent and treat chronic migraines in adults when other treatment options do not provide relief.
- **Holistic care options:** Our approach to treating headaches includes holistic treatment options beyond medications. Relieving stress or changing diet, exercise, or sleep habits could improve your headache symptoms or frequency. We will discuss these possibilities as part of your care.

Call
800.8.COOPER
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to learn more
about our
program

