

# MIGRAINES



More than half complain of severe or very severe headaches, significantly affecting and limiting their social and work activities with some confined to bed.<sup>3</sup>



Your lifestyle has a lot to do with preventing the frequency and intensity of migraines and headaches, whether it's cluster or tension headaches, or a migraine.<sup>1</sup>

## THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP PREVENT OR REDUCE THE FREQUENCY OF MIGRAINES AND/OR HEADACHES :

### AVOID CERTAIN FOODS<sup>1</sup>

Alcohol, chocolate, aged cheeses, and other foods can trigger a tension headache or migraine. But if you know certain foods are a problem for you, limit how often you eat them.

### EAT REGULAR, BALANCED MEALS<sup>1</sup>

Basing your diet primarily on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and healthy fats (and limiting foods that trigger an attack) is a good way to prevent migraines and/or headaches. Also, don't skip meals. Skipping meals makes you hungry, which can trigger a migraine.



### ESTABLISH A SLEEP SCHEDULE<sup>1</sup>

Sleep helps keep your immune system strong, wards off depression and anxiety, and promote deep relaxation. Poor sleeping habits, a lack of sleep, or too much sleep can actually trigger a migraine or tension headache.

### MANAGING MENSTRUAL MIGRAINES<sup>2</sup>

Besides dietary and lifestyle changes mentioned herein, it is also recommended that you keep well hydrated, as well as consider taking a magnesium supplement daily, increasing intake prior to your menstrual cycle.

### PRACTICE GOOD POSTURE<sup>1</sup>

Poor posture (e.g., hunching over a computer all day) can strain your head, neck, and shoulder muscles, leading to a migraine or headache. Check yourself throughout the day and correct your posture.

- Are your shoulders hunched?
- Is your spine straight?

By making some adjustments to your posture, it may help reduce the frequency of migraines and tension headaches.

### DON'T SMOKE<sup>1</sup>

Smoking not only damages your lungs, but it can also increase your headaches and other symptoms.

By avoiding things you know that may set off a migraine or headache and incorporating healthy habits, you can actually help to reduce the number of migraines or headaches you experience.<sup>1</sup>

Exercising may be beneficial for migraines and headaches as it boosts your mood giving you a feeling of well-being, decreases your sensitivity to pain due to the release of endorphins (the



'feel good' hormones), promotes a healthy sleep pattern, which also lowers stress levels.<sup>3</sup>

## **THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP PREVENT OR REDUCE THE FREQUENCY OF MIGRAINES AND/OR HEADACHES**

Biking, swimming, and walking are great ways to fit in aerobic exercise and help reduce the frequency and severity of migraines and headaches.<sup>3</sup>

Meditation exercises, deep breathing, and other relaxation techniques can ease your mind and your pain by helping you focus on the present moment as well as helping you foster a positive attitude.<sup>3</sup>

Yoga poses and other types of stretching can help reduce muscle tightness and tension in the head, neck, and shoulders. This is important because when these muscles are tight, it can make migraine and headache symptoms worse. Yoga helps loosen these muscles as well as helps reduce stress.<sup>3</sup>

### **LIMIT HIGH-IMPACT EXERCISE<sup>3</sup>**

When you have migraines and/or headaches, intense exercise, such as running, can aggravate head pain and other symptoms.<sup>3</sup>

### **WARM UP AND COOL DOWN<sup>3</sup>**

For every workout, aim to warm up for 10 minutes and cool down for 10 minutes.<sup>3</sup>

*As always,  
talk to your doctor  
before starting an exercise  
program, and if you experience  
new pain or more intense  
migraines and/or headaches  
during or after exercise,  
advise your doctor.<sup>3</sup>*

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**Please note:** this is an education information leaflet only and should not be used for diagnosis. For more information on Migraines, consult your healthcare professional.

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**References:** **1.** Practical Pain Management. 7 Lifestyle Tips to Help Prevent Migraines and Headaches. [cited 12 June 2018]. Available from: <https://www.practicalpainmanagement.com/patient/conditions/headache>. **2.** Can you prevent Menstrual Migraines? – Holistic Health and Wellness. [cited 16 July 2018]. Available from: <https://holistic-healthandwellness.com>. **3.** Practical Pain Management. Exercise Tips for Migraines and Headaches. 7 Lifestyle Tips to Help Prevent Migraines and Headaches. [cited 21 June 2018]. Available from: <https://www.practicalpainmanagement.com/patient/conditions/headache>

