



MIGRAINE HEADACHES

Migraine is a condition that involves severe, recurring headaches and other symptoms (e.g. flashing light)s.

Some sufferers (approximately 30-20% of people) can feel the onset of a migraine due to sensory changes, described as an aura. The aura acts as a warning of the on-set of a migraine and can include:

- Confusing thoughts or experiences,
- Flashing lights,
- zig-zagging lines in the visual field,
- Blind spots or blank patches in the vision,
- Pins and needles in arm or leg,
- Weakness in the shoulder, neck or limbs.

However, more commonly, a person will experience a migraine without an aura.



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Symptoms of Migraine

Migraine is different to a tension headache in that it usually occurs in stages, and can last for several days, affecting a person's daily life including their ability to work or to study. Whilst there are no definitive causes experts suggest that following causes:

- Changes in the balance of chemicals in the brain
- Changes in nerve communications
- Changes in blood vessels

What triggers migraine?

Triggers vary from person to person and can include:

- Changes in the balance of chemicals in the brain
- Hormonal changes - for example menstruation
- Emotional triggers - for example stress, depression, anxiety, shock, excitement
- Physical - for example tiredness, lack of sleep, shoulder or neck tension, poor posture, physical over exertion, low blood sugar, dehydration.
- Diet - alcohol, caffeine, chocolate, cheese, citrus fruits, and food containing the additive tyramine.
- Medication - sleeping tablets, Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- Environmental factors - flickering lights, poor lighting, strong smells, nicotine, temperature changes.
- Medical - fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), an overactive bladder.

Top Tips to Manage Migraines

A migraine often occurs in response to a trigger. Identifying and avoiding triggers can help reduce the on-set of a migraine, and the following self-help suggestions may help.

- Keeping a migraine diary
- Improving quality of sleep
- Drinking plenty of water
- Reducing stress
- Exercise
- Minimising noise, light, or both
- Taking supplements (feverfew, magnesium, coenzyme 10, riboflavin)
- Acupuncture
- Massage using pressure points (see below)
- 6 exercises to help with migraine

Further Support

For some people, recurrent attacks of migraine can be debilitating to such an extent that regular life is disrupted. The Torus Wellbeing Clinic offers a treatment protocol which includes a combination of dietary advice and massage to help ease the symptoms. For further information contact us at www.toruswellbeingclinic.co.uk



Elgin Chambers, 24 Cemetery Road, Shelton, Stoke on Trent, ST4 2DL

Tel: 01782 273314 | info@toruswellbeingclinic.co.uk | www.toruswellbeingclinic.co.uk

Owner/Founder: Dr Nicola Brough PhD, RCST