

Foods that may trigger migraines

Aged, canned, cured or processed meat, including bologna, game, ham, herring, hot dogs, pepperoni and sausage
Aged cheese
Alcoholic beverages, especially red wine
Aspartame
Avocados
Beans, including pole, broad, lima, Italian, navy, pinto and garbanzo
Brewer's yeast, including fresh yeast coffee cake, donuts and sourdough bread
Caffeine (in excess)
Canned soup or bouillon cubes
Chocolate, cocoa and carob
Cultured dairy products, such as buttermilk and sour cream
Figs
Lentils

Meat tenderizer
Monosodium glutamate (MSG)
Nuts and peanut butter
Onions, except small amounts for flavoring
Papaya
Passion fruit
Pea pods
Pickled, preserved or marinated foods, such as olives and pickles, and some snack foods
Raisins
Red plums
Sauerkraut
Seasoned salt
Snow peas
Soy sauce

- Strong odors, bright lights or loud noises
- Changes in weather or altitude
- Being tired, stressed or depressed or the let-down after a stressful event
- Changes in sleeping patterns or sleeping time
- Missing meals or fasting
- Menstrual periods, birth control pills or hormones

How are migraines treated?

There are 2 types of migraine treatments. Some treatments are used to relieve the headache pain. Most of these treatments should be started as soon as you think you're getting a migraine. The other group includes treatments that are used to prevent headaches before they occur.

Can nonprescription medicines help relieve the pain?

Yes. Nonprescription medicines can help migraine pain. They include aspirin, acetaminophen (one brand name: Tylenol), an acetaminophen, aspirin and caffeine combination (one brand name: Excedrin Migraine), ibuprofen (one brand name: Motrin), naproxen (brand name: Aleve), and ketoprofen (brand name: Orudis KT).

What about prescription medicines?

Tips on reducing the pain

- Lie down in a dark, quiet room.
- Put a cold compress or rag over your forehead.
- Massage your scalp using a lot of pressure.
- Put pressure on your temples.

People with more severe pain may need prescription medicine. A medicine called ergotamine (brand name: Ergostat) can be effective alone or combined with other medicines (some brand names: Cafergot, Ercaf, Wigraine). Dihydroergotamine (brand names: Migranal, D.H.E. 45) is related to ergotamine and can be helpful.

Other prescription medicines for migraines include sumatriptan (brand name: Imitrex), zolmitriptan (brand name: Zomig), naratriptan (brand name: Amerge) rizatriptan (brand name: Maxalt), almotriptan (brand name: Axert) and fratriptan (brand name: Frova).

Many combinations of medicines (one brand name: Midrin) are also available.

If the pain won't go away, stronger medicine may be needed, such as a narcotic (brand name: Stadol nasal spray) or medicines that contain a barbiturate. These medicines can be habit-forming and should be used cautiously.

Can medicine help prevent migraines?

Yes. Medicine to prevent migraines may be helpful if your headaches happen more than twice a month or if your headaches make it hard for you to work and function. Examples of medicines used to prevent migraines include propranolol (brand name: Inderal), timolol (brand name: Blocadren), divalproex (brand name: Depakote) and some antidepressants.

What else can I do to prevent migraines?

Try to avoid foods or other things that seem to cause migraines for you. Get plenty of sleep. Try to relax and reduce the stress in your life.