



Managing Migraines

Your health is important.

Because the Youens and Duchicela Clinic believes this, the following is brought to you in an effort to provide wellness information that you can use to help manage and maintain your health.

This week, the focus is on pain management from migraines.

Everyone gets a headache from time to time, but some sufferers deal with more than temporary discomfort. Those who feel intense, concentrated throbbing in an area of the brain for 4–72 hours may be experiencing a migraine.

Migraines are a source of headache pain for many Americans—so much so that, according to the Migraine Research Foundation (MRF), an individual visits a U.S. emergency room every 10 seconds due to headache or migraine pain. Additionally, over 10% of the population and one in four households include someone who suffers with migraines. And when a migraine attack happens to one individual, it can certainly affect others around him/her.

According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, researchers believe that migraines are inherited abnormalities in genes that control the activities of certain cell populations in the brain. These cells can trigger a pulse that prevents an individual from fully functioning.

According to the MRF, this pulsing can also be accompanied by some (or all) of these symptoms:

- extreme sensitivity to light/sound/taste/smell
- visual disturbances
- nausea



- vomiting
- tingling or numbness in the extremities or face

While some individuals may be genetically predisposed, then, to migraines, certain triggers can also contribute, such as lack of food or sleep, exposure to light, anxiety, stress, or (in women) hormonal irregularities. Discussing these triggers with your physician is important for the management of migraines.

Children can also be victim to migraines. The MRF estimates that 10% of school-age children suffer from migraines and that these children are absent from school twice as often as children who don't experience migraines. Their symptoms can be the same as those in adult sufferers, though they may express their discomfort in varied ways.

The good news is that, even though migraines are genetic, treatment options exist. One treatment option is through acute treatment, which includes the use of drugs to lessen the pain during a migraine attack. Many people self-medicate using over-the-counter drugs, but this may not adequately manage the pain in all cases.

A second treatment option is through preventative treatment, which involves the help of a medical professional to prescribe daily medications or lifestyle changes that could avoid the triggering of attacks.

A third treatment option is through complementary treatment, which involves relaxation techniques, exercise, acupuncture, and proper rest and diet advice given by a medical professional.

Family physicians are great resources with whom to speak for those who experience migraines. The right treatment combination may not happen immediately, and sometimes specialists are needed in the process, but options are available. So if you suspect you may have more than a headache, please see your doctor.

For more information on the data given, visit MRF at migraineresearchfoundation.org. The information provided here is not to be used as a substitute for medical attention. Remember that, should you have specific medical questions or desire more information, contact your doctor.