

## Migraine Pain: Relief Is Out There

If you get severe headaches that don't go away with over-the-counter medications, ask your doctor if they might be migraines. Many people who have migraines never get diagnosed, so they don't get the medications that could help the most.

Migraine headaches are different than typical headaches. They can interfere with your daily life and ability to work. They can last for hours or days. The pain usually affects one side of the head, but it can affect both sides as well. Plus, the pain can come with nausea, vomiting, unclear vision, and sensitivity to light and sound.

Some people have warning signs, also known as a "migraine aura," before they get a migraine. They may see flashing lights, have vision that turns to gray, feel tingling in an arm or leg, or have trouble talking.

### Getting a Diagnosis

If you think you may have migraines, tell your doctor about your symptoms. There is no specific test for migraines, but your doctor can tell a lot about your headache by asking you questions. If you are diagnosed with migraine, you and your doctor can work together to find the best treatment for you. While there is no cure for migraines, there are treatments that can reduce the number and severity of headaches a person has.

There are two types of migraine medications:

- Symptom-relief medications (also known as abortive medications), used *during* a migraine to reduce pain and other symptoms; and
- Preventive medications, used every day to prevent headaches from starting.

### Symptom Relievers

Over-the-counter pain relievers, such as aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), and acetaminophen (Tylenol®) can combat migraine pain in some people. But people who need something stronger can turn to prescription drugs such as:

- Triptans, which include sumatriptan (Imitrex®), zolmitriptan (Zomig®), and rizatriptan (Maxalt®); or
- Ergot derivatives, which include ergotamine tartrate with caffeine (Cafergot®), Wigraine®) and dihydroergotamine (Migranal®).

### Preventive Medications

For people who get frequent or unbearable migraines, preventive medications may be a good option. These include drugs that lower blood pressure, antidepressants, and anti-seizure medications. The type of preventive medication your doctor prescribes may depend on the medications you already take and any other medical issues you have. You may need to try different preventive medications before you find the one that works best. The good news is, there are several options to try. Chances are good that you'll be able to find relief.

### A Health Coach Can Help

To learn about migraines and easy things you can do at home to prevent them, call a Health Coach. Health Coaches are specially trained healthcare professionals, such as nurses, dietitians, and respiratory therapists. They are available by phone, anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at no charge to you.



To talk to a Health Coach, call [1-800-658-2750](tel:1-800-658-2750). You can also get information online at [www.thedialogcenter.com/bcbsnd](http://www.thedialogcenter.com/bcbsnd).