

Headache Treatment Plan

Lifestyle:

1. Sleep: keep a consistent routine with the same bedtime and wake-up time including weekends, avoid napping. Consider trying the CBTi free app
2. Diet: don't skip meals, avoid artificial sweeteners, colors, and preservatives. Try to eat breakfast with 12-15 grams of protein within 30-60 minutes of awakening each day
3. Hydration: try to drink at least 1.5 litres of water each day
4. Caffeine: try to limit to 2 or fewer caffeinated drinks per day
5. Walk/move/exercise regularly
6. Stress management/mindfulness: even 5 minutes per day of mindfulness can be very beneficial for headaches
 - a. Apps: Headspace, Calm, Pacifica, StopBreatheThink, Mindshift, Smiling Mind, Sitting Still
 - b. Websites: www.dawnbuse.com ; www.smilingmind.com.au ; www.neuronovocentre.com ; www.mindful.ca ; chooseemuse.com ; bigwhitewall.ca ; bouncebackOntario.ca ; MAST online program via St. Michael's Hospital

Headache Diary

Try keeping track of your headaches and any associated symptoms, triggers, and treatment effectiveness. The free app migraine buddy can be helpful, or use any paper calendar you like. Try looking back for 12 hours before the onset of your attacks to identify any triggers.

Internet Resources:

1. Canadian Headache Society: migrainecanada.org
2. American Headache Society: americanheadachesociety.org
3. American Migraine Foundation

Vitamins/Minerals

Several vitamins and minerals that occur naturally in the body have been studied and found to have benefit for migraine prevention. Not all vitamins are safe in pregnancy, and you should discuss these with your doctor if you are planning to become pregnant or if you become pregnant.

1. Magnesium citrate (may cause loose bowel movements). Start at 150mg nightly for 2 weeks, then increase to 300mg nightly, then up to a maximum of 450mg nightly. Patients with aura can try taking a dose of magnesium citrate 150mg at aura onset.
2. Vitamin B2 (riboflavin) (may cause bright yellow urine). Start at 100mg twice daily, then increase to 200mg twice daily

3. Vitamin D3 1000-2000 IU daily
4. Melatonin 3mg nightly 2-3 hours before bed

Acute Treatment

Most acute treatments, if taken too often, can lead to medication overuse headache (formerly called rebound headache), where your brain becomes dependent on the medication, starts to process pain differently, and the medications actually promote worsening of headache. You should try to limit your intake of medications such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, and triptans to no more than 10 days per month total. Medications that include a narcotic such as codeine, for example acetaminophen with codeine or acetaminophen with oxycodone, can cause medication overuse headache when taken as little as 3 days per month.

Preventative Treatment

Most preventative treatments take 2-3 months to be effective. The goal of prevention is not to be headache-free, but to reduce the frequency and severity of your headaches.