

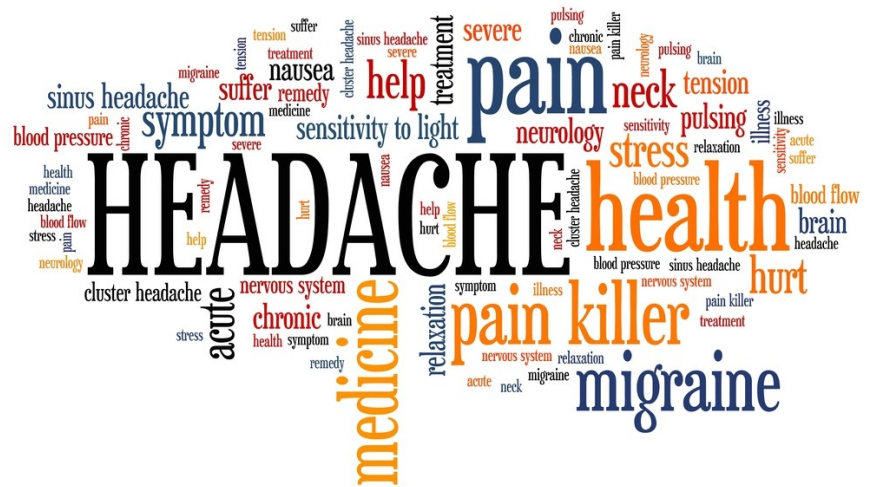
Healthy People

June is National Migraine & Headache Awareness Month

When to See a Physician for Your Headache

There are times when headaches or uncharacteristic migraine symptoms are indications of something that needs medical attention. Some individuals are reluctant to call their doctors or go to an Emergency Department because they don't want to arrive only to learn that nothing out of the ordinary is wrong. Please, don't be concerned about that; get medical attention if you think you fit the following criteria.

- You have more than the occasional headache
- Your headaches are severe or come on quickly
- Your headache is accompanied by any of the following: (And you have not discussed these symptoms with your doctor before)
 - o Confusion
 - o Dizziness
 - o Fever
 - o Numbness
 - o Persistent vomiting
 - o Shortness of breath
 - o Slurred speech
 - o Stiff neck
 - o Unpredicted symptoms affecting your ears, nose, throat or eyes
 - o Unrelenting diarrhea
 - o Vision loss
 - o Weakness
- You have a headache that persists, and continues to get worse or won't stop
- Your headaches interfere with your normal activities of daily life
- You find yourself taking pain relievers more than two days a week
- You take over-the-counter medications for headache relief but the recommended dosage is not adequate
- Coughing, sneezing, bending over, exercise or sexual activity cause headaches
- You have headaches that continue and that began after a head injury, or other trauma
- The characteristics of your headaches change
- The symptoms of your migraine attacks change



What is migraine? What causes it, and how can I treat it?

Generally, a migraine begins as a dull ache and then develops into a constant throbbing and pulsating pain that you may feel at the temples, as well as the front or back of one or both sides of the head. The pain is usually accompanied by a combination of nausea, vomiting, and sensitivity to light and noise. Some people (about 15% of migraine sufferers) experience an aura before an attack. The cause of migraine is believed to be chemical reactions in the brain. Treatment for migraine may include over-the-counter or prescription medications, as well as self-help techniques such as relaxation training and biofeedback.

Are over-the-counter medications for migraine effective?

Over-the-counter, or "OTC," medications may be effective in relieving mild to moderate pain and associated symptoms of migraine. However, you should see your doctor before beginning any treatment regimen for migraine.

What are preventive medications for migraine?

Preventive medications for migraine – sometimes referred to as "prophylactic" treatments – are used to reduce the frequency, severity, and length of migraine attacks. Most preventive migraine medications were initially developed to treat other diseases, such as seizures, depression, or hypertension. Examples of preventive medications include antiepileptic medications, antidepressants, beta-blockers, calcium channel blockers, and NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs).