

Headaches and Migraine

Migraine is a type of headache that may last from four hours to three days with a long list of symptoms: **nausea**, **vomiting**, **throbbing pain**, **sensitivity** to light, sound and smell, and visual **disturbances**.

Although both genetics and **environmental** factors play an **apparent** role in the **condition**, not much is really understood about the causes of migraine. As serotonin levels drop during a migraine attack, it is assumed that an imbalance in brain chemicals may also be a factor. Other possible factors are changes in the **brainstem** and its interaction with the trigeminal-nerve which is a primary pain pathway. **Regardless** of which causes are in-

involved, several things may **trigger** a migraine attack. Among these triggers are the female hormonal changes, such as the drop in oestrogen associated with menstrual problems that trigger the headaches before or during menstruation in many women known to suffer from migraine.

Female pharmacy customer, about 40 years old: Hello. I've had a headache since yesterday evening. Nothing that I have done since then has helped. I think it might be an attack of migraine, but I haven't had migraine for years.

PTA: Did you take any **painkillers** yesterday or this morning?

I did take ibuprofen yesterday shortly after the headache started, but it didn't help. I haven't taken anything this morning because I was afraid that it would effect my stomach and I'm feeling nauseated anyway.

Do you have any other symptoms aside from the nausea?

Well the pain is only on one side of my head and it's a really unpleasant throbbing type of pain. Oh yes, and extreme sensitivity to light. I'm really starting to get worried, which is why I came here first instead of going to my

GP. You know how long it takes if you don't have a long-term appointment there!

Well, from your **description** I think it is migraine, but I need to ask you one or two more questions to make sure it's not something else.

Okay, go ahead.

Did you have any symptoms before the headache occurred? You know, **irritability**, food **cravings**, that type of thing?

Now that you mention it, yes, I did have very unusual food cravings for one or two days before the headache. And I was very irritable!

Did you also have problems with your vision? I mean, did you have any aura? You did say that you were sensitive to light.

Do you mean zigzag lights on one side of my face? Yes, I certainly did!

Well, that all sounds like a classic migraine attack. And you have had it before?

Yes, years ago. My GP told me, that's migraine.

Ok, we have this medication here which contains triptan. It's one of the **medications of choice** for treating migraine. It's really quick and very effective.

Good! I'll take it!

Just one more thing that I need to ask, are you taking any anti-depression medication or medication for high blood pressure?

No.

Here you are.

Thank you.

I wish you a speedy recovery.

Goodbye.

Thank you, goodbye! ■

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VOCABULARY

Nausea	Übelkeit, Brechreiz
Vomiting	Erbrechen
Throbbing	pochend, klopfend
Sensitivity	Empfindlichkeit
Disturbances	Störungen
Environmental	Umweltbedingt
Apparent	offensichtlich
Condition	(hier) Leiden
Brainstem	Hirnstamm
Regardless	ungeachtet
Trigger	auslösen
Painkillers	Schmerzmittel
Stomach	Magen
Description	Beschreibung
Irritability	Reizbarkeit
Cravings	Verlangen im Sinne von Appetit auf etwas
medication of choice	Medikament erster Wahl
I wish you a speedy recovery	Gute Besserung