

MIGRAINE ADVICE FOR 7 TO 12 YEAR OLDS



You are not alone – seven out of every ten children in your school will probably have had a headache at some time



the
migraine
trust



What is your headache like?

If you are reading this it's probably because you get headaches. Maybe you have them every week, or every month. Although headaches can really mess up what you want to do, they probably aren't a sign that something is badly wrong with you.

What is the difference between a headache and a migraine?

A migraine involves more than just a headache. If you have a migraine you may feel:

- really sick, and might be sick
- extra sensitive to light and noise
- you want to lie down and sleep to make it better
- that moving about, or exercising, usually makes your headache worse.

What else can happen?

You might feel dizzy or weak before the migraine. You might even have problems talking, or see patterns of lights or lines, this is called aura. Aura can be quite scary, especially the first time it happens.

If you get headaches or migraines you might also get car sick. Some children with migraine don't get a headache at all – they just get a pain in the stomach.

Your head pain might last for an hour or it could go on for hours, sometimes days.



**Work out
what triggers
your migraine**

Getting help

- Tell your parents or carer about how your headaches make you feel – they can arrange for you to see your doctor
- There is no special test which can tell if you have migraine so you need to give your doctor as much information as possible about your headaches – so keep a migraine diary
- With the right information your doctor can work out a plan for you to manage your headaches.

Keeping a diary

The best way of remembering what your headaches are like is to write down or draw what you feel when you get one. You can download a diary from our website, www.migrainetrust.org or use the one included with this booklet.

Writing down or drawing how you were feeling before a migraine attack started is also helpful. This is because these feelings may be able to warn you in the future of a migraine attack.

These are some things you might look out for before an attack starts:

- feeling tired
- yawning a lot
- wanting to eat certain foods
- feeling cross
- wanting to be on your own.

Why does your head hurt?

Most people who have migraines start getting them when they are children. Migraine happens because your brain is extra sensitive to certain changes. Scientists are still trying to work out exactly why that is. The good news is that some people grow out of their migraines.

Can I stop it happening?

Some things can set off or 'trigger' a migraine. Triggers are different for everyone. Here's a list of common triggers some children have noticed:

Make sure you have enough to drink

It can make a big difference. If you find drinking regularly helps, ask if you can drink water in class and explain why.

Do not skip meals

Food is really important for energy. Work out when is the best time to eat your breakfast and lunch. Often, it's not *what* you eat but *when* you eat. Stick to these times even if you're in a rush or don't really feel hungry. If you're with friends, don't let it make you feel different. Stick to your routine and don't be embarrassed by it.

Exercise

You might find that you get a migraine after you suddenly run about a lot. If you exercise regularly, though, your body will get used to it and you are less likely to get a migraine

Stress

Being at school can cause stress, which is a common trigger. Many young students will have headaches during the school year, but don't have them during holidays. If you're feeling under pressure or feel stressed:

- don't bottle it up
- talk to a friend, a teacher, a family member or someone you trust
- get organised – plan your days and do the important things first.

Changing your routine

Stick to a regular routine. You might notice that you get a migraine if you miss lunch one day or sleep in late one morning.

Working out what triggers your migraine

The best way of working out your triggers is to be aware of what's happening in your life every time you get an attack.

Use your diary to note things like:

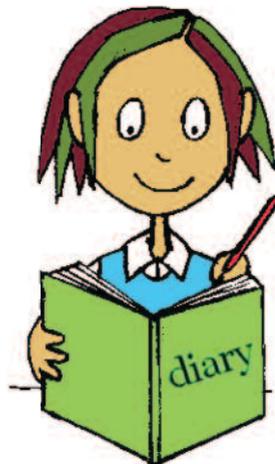
- how you feel
- when and what you ate
- what time you got up.

You might find that you get fewer attacks once you start to control your triggers. Use your headache diary to count your attacks, and work out if your plan for managing them is working. Cutting down the number of attacks you have is a good target to aim for. Don't be disappointed if you still get attacks.

Remember to plan in time to get some rest and relaxation

If you've got to do homework after school, make sure you've planned some breaks. Listening to music, getting some fresh air, or just getting away from the computer for 15 minutes, can all help. Choose what's best for you.

Use your headache diary to count your attacks, and work out if your plan for managing them is working



Medicine to avoid an attack

If your headaches are having a very bad effect on you, your doctor might suggest you take medication to try and avoid them. We call this preventative medication.

Medicine to treat an attack

Your doctor may also give you medicine to treat your migraine attack. You need to take this medicine as soon as you get the attack. You might be able to leave a dose of the medicine at school. The type of medicine you will be given will depend on what your headaches are like. If you often feel very sick, your doctor might give you something to help with this.

What should I do when I get a migraine?

If you feel a migraine attack coming, the earlier you start trying to stop it the better. Firstly, tell someone about it. If you're at school, tell your teacher.

Steps might include simple things like:

- having a drink or eating something
- sitting quietly or lying down
- sleeping, even for just a few minutes can really help
- rest when you start to feel better.

This booklet includes an action card for you to fill in about how you treat your headaches.

Hopefully, you won't need to go home from school, and if you're at home, you can carry on with your day. If your attack doesn't get better, you might need to go home to bed.

Feeling different

Sometimes your headaches might make you feel different from your friends. If you have to leave the class because of your headaches, or can't meet your friends when you had arranged to, tell them why. With a bit of explaining, your friends can understand your headaches better, and you'll feel better too.

Tips for managing migraine

- Work out what triggers your migraine
- Drink plenty of water and eat regularly
- Avoid sugary snacks and fizzy drinks
- Take regular exercise – aim for three times per week
- Try to keep a migraine diary for three months
- Fill in your migraine attack action card
- Tell your parents or carer or your teacher about your migraine

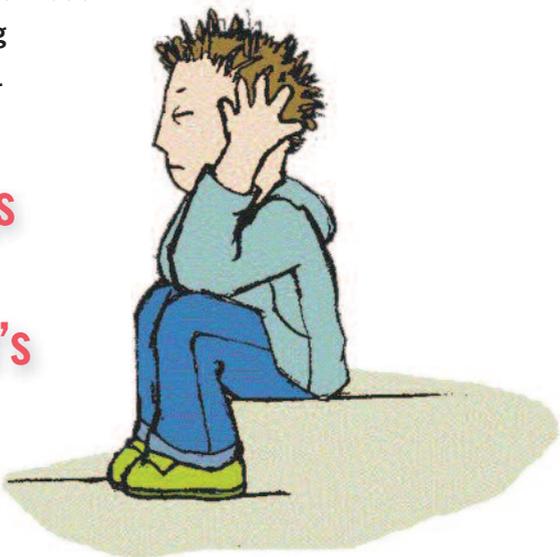
The Migraine Trust

You can find out more about migraine by calling The Migraine Trust on **020 7462 6601** or email **info@migrainetrust.org**

The internet is full of useful information.

Try visiting **www.migrainetrust.org**
the website of The Migraine Trust.

**Lots of things
can help –
choose what's
best for you**



Also available:

- Migraine advice for teens
- Migraine advice for parents and carers, and those who supervise children and teens such as teachers

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We hope you find the information in this booklet helpful, but it is not a substitute for the advice a doctor or pharmacist may give you, based on their expert knowledge of your history, condition and treatment.



55-56 Russell Square
London WC1B 4HP

Tel: 020 7462 6601

Fax: 020 7436 2880

Email: info@migrainetrust.org

www.migrainetrust.org

Registered Charity No. 1081300