



# Resource Library

## Migraine Awareness September 2023



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Derby and Derbyshire  
Integrated Care Board



Mid Mercia



Derby City Council

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# About migraine

[www.migrainetrust.org](http://www.migrainetrust.org)

## What is a migraine?

Migraine is a severe and painful long-term health condition. If you have migraine you will have migraine attacks, which can be a whole-body experience.

Common symptoms of an attack can include:

- head pain
- problems with your sight such as seeing flashing lights
- being very sensitive to light
- sounds and smells
- fatigue
- feeling sick and being sick.

Different people get different symptoms. When you have a migraine attack, you may not be able to function normally.

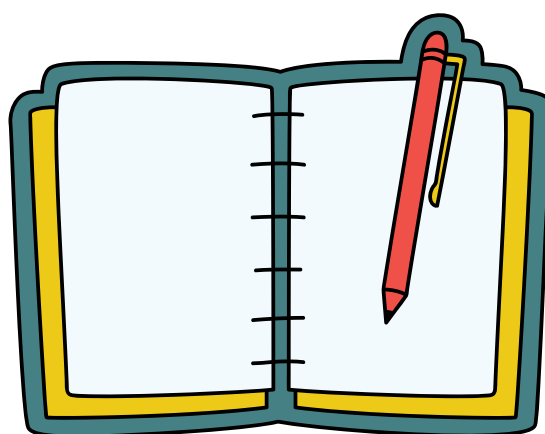
Migraine attacks usually last for between four hours and three days. Some symptoms may start about 24 hours before you get head pain, and end about 24 hours after you stop having head pain. Most people don't have any symptoms in between migraine attacks.

# Living with migraine

## Keep a headache diary

Keeping a headache diary can be useful to take with you to your GP, to help you to recognise triggers, and to assess whether medication is working. These are the things you should include in your diary:

- The date
- The day of the week
- Duration and severity of the migraine
- Symptoms
- Any medication you take



# Living with migraine

## Exercise

The therapeutic effects of exercise are well documented. Regular physical activity will improve your overall health and reduce the risk of developing diseases like high blood pressure, diabetes, depression and obesity. Benefits also include reducing stress, reducing cholesterol levels, improving the quality of sleep patterns and producing a feeling of wellbeing.

If you are prone to migraine you may have found that strenuous exercise can provoke an attack. This may have led you to avoid exercise as you have identified it as a trigger. If this is the case then you are missing out on the benefits that exercise can bring to your overall wellbeing.

Previous studies have suggested that mild regular aerobic exercise offers the most benefits to those with migraine. Remember, it is important to choose an exercise activity that you enjoy. It could be:  
**Jogging, Swimming, Dancing, Cycling or Brisk walking.**

[www.migrainetrust.org](http://www.migrainetrust.org)

## Migraine and sleep

Sleep and headache are closely linked. Migraine attacks may be both caused and relieved by sleep, as well as being a cause of too much or too little sleep.

Your body and mind go through a range of changes over your circadian rhythm period (around 24 hours). It controls your sleep-wake pattern and also changes how alert you are.

Your rhythm mainly responds to changes in light. The body clock in your brain controls this. In the evening, it starts to get dark and your eyes signal this to your body clock. Your body clock then tells the brain to release the hormone melatonin. This makes you sleepy. When it gets lighter, the brain reduces the amount of melatonin it makes. This starts to wake you up. However, we each have a slightly different rhythm which is why some people are more alert in the morning and others, later.

Even within the states of sleep and wakefulness, there are faster, shorter cycles of brain activity.

# Living with migraine

## Migraine and sleep

Migraine attacks are said to be more likely to occur between 04:00 and 09:00 am, which might suggest a timing mechanism that relates to sleep or circadian rhythms, or both. Lack of sleep is a well-known trigger, as is too much sleep (such as lying in at the weekend). Similarly, shift-work and jet lag can be triggers in some people.

Excessive sleepiness may be part of the premonitory phase before a migraine attack, or a symptom following the attack. Sleep can also be very helpful during a migraine attack, and may often help stop the attack, particularly in children.



# Living with migraine

## Sleep Hygiene

Good sleep hygiene is an important step to reduce migraine by developing a regular sleep pattern through these measures:

- Try to go to bed and get up at the same time each day
- Understand your sleep need, including both the timing of sleep (when feels right for you to go to bed), and the duration of sleep (most adults need about 6 to 8 hours a night).
- Spend time outdoors or in natural light during the daytime
- Try and make your sleeping environment as restful as possible
- Exercise, preferably before dinner rather than before bed
- It would be sensible to recommend that you don't use your bed for activities that could be done elsewhere (such as watching TV, studying)
- Avoiding caffeine before bed is recommended, as is avoiding alcohol



# Living with migraine

## Treatment options

There are numerous treatment options available. Speak to your GP about what may be most beneficial for you.

- Acute medicines
- Preventative medicines
- Gepants
- Botox injections
- Greater Occipital Nerve block injections
- Medical devices
- Supplements
- Acupuncture

Some treatment options may not be available on the NHS and there are a few different routes you could explore to access this including: Individual Funding Request, Self Funding, Clinical Trials and Studies.

# Get support

## Migraine Trust Helpline

The Migraine Trust offer free, confidential information and support for everyone affected by migraine.

You can contact them by telephone on **0808 802 0066**, their email contact form, or online chat by going to their website.

**[www.migrainetrust.org/get-support](http://www.migrainetrust.org/get-support)**



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