

## DESCRIPTION

A severe type of headache that involves more than just the headache pain. There are five stages that may occur with a migraine. Prodrome (warning signs), aura (beginning symptoms), headache itself, resolution (pain stops), and postdrome (tiredness and other symptoms).

A **prodrome** may occur hours or days before an attack and can include changes in mood, behavior, energy or appetite.

Some people also experience an **aura**, minutes or hours before an attack. Aura's are often accompanied by the inability to see clearly or seeing bright spots and zigzag patterns. Visual disturbances may last several minutes or several hours but stop once the headache begins.

The **migraine headache** is typically a dull, boring pain in the temple that spreads to the entire side of the head. Sometimes, migraines can occur bilaterally. The pain usually becomes more intense and throbs. Nausea, vomiting and/or sensitivity to light and sound accompany the headache. These headaches can last from hours to days.

**Postdrome** (may occur after an attack and last for hours or days). It includes exhaustion, weakness, lethargy.

## PREVENTIVE MEASURES

No preventive steps for first attack. After diagnosis, take steps to help prevent future attacks. Try to avoid the triggers of migraines (such as some foods and medications, bright lights, weather changes, high altitudes, and stress). Exercise daily to maintain fitness. Keep a diary to learn your own specific triggers.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

People with migraines tend to have them over many years. They can often be controlled with treatment. Migraines may end when a person gets older. Although migraines may interfere with your day-to-day activities serious complications, such as stroke, are very rare.

## TREATMENT

Treatment is usually with medication therapy and self-care although hospital care may be needed for a severe attack. At the first sign of a migraine attack:

- Apply a cold cloth to your head and lie down in a quiet, dark room. Relax and sleep if possible.
- Minimize noise, light and odors (such as cooking odors and tobacco smoke).
- Don't read.

## MEDICATIONS

- No single drug works best for everyone. A variety of drugs can be prescribed for symptoms and prevention.
- Triptans in self-administered by subcutaneous (under the skin) injection or oral tablet.
- Ergot preparations in a tablet, suppository, aerosol, or injection form.
- Aspirin, other NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), acetaminophen, or ibuprofen.
- Narcotics or butalbital (alone or with other drugs).
- Antihistamines to expand blood vessels.
- Antiemetics to decrease nausea and vomiting.
- Vasoconstrictors to narrow blood vessels.
- Beta-adrenergic or calcium channel blockers; antidepressants to prevent attacks.
- Note: Overuse of drugs can cause a "rebound" into another headache.

## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You develop a fever
- You experience faintness or passing out
- You experience numbness, tingling, or weakness in your arms or legs.
- New or unexplained symptoms develop.