

## **WHAT IS TRIGGERING YOUR MIGRAINE ATTACKS??**

Migraine triggers can set off your headache attacks. Finding the specific triggers that affect you requires tracking your migraine events. Discovering your migraine triggers will help you know how to avoid migraine attacks.

**FIND OUT WHAT TRIGGERS YOUR MIGRAINE** - Everyone has different triggers that set off migraine. Below is a list of the most common migraine triggers. Keep in mind that your trigger may not be on the list. In many cases, people with migraine are usually affected by more than one trigger. Sometimes it takes a combination of two or more triggers to set off the chemical chain reaction that may result in a migraine attack.

**KEEP A HEADACHE DIARY** - One of the biggest problems with identifying migraine triggers is that the body's reaction to foods eaten or events that happened can be delayed by 24 hours. This means that the only reliable way to isolate your triggers is to keep a diary, looking backward at least 24 hours from the start of each migraine attack.

**AVOID YOUR MIGRAINE TRIGGERS** - Reviewing your headache diary will often reveal a pattern of trigger factors that stand out clearly and can be avoided. Some triggers, such as weather changes, may be impossible to fully avoid.

### **Environmental Triggers:**

- Bright lights and sunshine, or glare from snow or computers
- Loud noises
- Strong or odd odors, such as cigarette smoke or perfume
- High altitudes or being in a pressurized commercial airline cabin
- Weather changes-extremes of cold and hot with high humidity, and changes in barometric pressure

### **Physical Triggers:**

- Severe fatigue
- Physical illness
- Lack of sleep, jet lag, or oversleeping
- Hormonal changes during a women's menstrual cycle with most attacks occurring just before or during the menstrual period due to a drop in estrogen. Others experience attacks at mid-cycle during ovulation
- Muscle tightening in the neck and jaw from physical or emotional stress
- Poor posture
- Tobacco use

### **Psychological (Emotional) Triggers:**

- A dramatic increase or decrease in stress can trigger migraine. Emotional stress can come from not only unhappy or painful experiences, but also out of joy, excitement, and surprises.

### **Pharmacological (Medication) Triggers:**

- Estrogen- used for hormone replacement in post-menopausal woman
- Birth control pills
- Vasodilating drugs such as nitroglycerin
- Let your provider know all of the medications that you take, including prescription, over-the-counter, and supplements
- Misuse of narcotics and butalbital
- Overuse of over-the-counter or prescription medications, greater than 3 days per week can trigger rebound headaches

### **Dietary (Food and Fluid Related) Triggers:**

- Skipping meals can lower your blood sugar and trigger migraine
- Dehydration – not drinking enough water

*People with migraine can have a chemical sensitivity to certain foods or substances:*

- Ripened cheeses
- Chocolate
- Alcoholic beverages
- Artificial sweeteners
- Foods containing monosodium glutamate (MSG) in Chinese foods
- Excessive caffeine (tea, coffee, soda)
- Onions
- Anything fermented, pickled, or marinated
- Sour cream and yogurt
- Pods or broad beans (lima, navy, and pea pods)
- Fresh breads, raised coffee cakes, and doughnuts
- Citrus fruits (oranges, lemons, limes, and grapefruits)
- Bananas
- Pizza
- Pork
- Fermented sausage (bologna, salami, pepperoni, summer sausage, and hot dogs)
- Seafood (shrimp, crab, lobster) and herring
- Processed foods
- Salty foods
- Food additives