

## Migraine – Prevention & Treatment

Migraine is a type of headache, which is recurrent in nature, moderate to severe in intensity, usually associated with nausea & vomiting & generally unilateral. It's much more common than you may imagine. The prevalence of migraine cases recorded in India is approximately 16 - 20% of the population. The disease is much more common in females.

### Where's the HEADACHE?

A guide to understanding types of headaches by where the pain is located



#### TENSION HEADACHE

**CAUSES:** Minor stress, anxiety, fatigue, lack of sleep

**WHAT CAN HELP:**  
Acetaminophen or ibuprofen



#### SINUS HEADACHE

**CAUSES:** Common cold, allergies, sinus infection

**WHAT CAN HELP:**  
Decongestant; prescription medication for sinus infections



#### MIGRAINE HEADACHE

**CAUSES:** Triggers vary for migraine sufferers, from foods to hormone changes

**WHAT CAN HELP:**  
Over-the-counter migraine medication, consultation with a primary care provider



#### HORMONAL HEADACHE

**CAUSES:** The start of a period or changes in estrogen levels

**WHAT CAN HELP:**  
Anti-inflammatory medication, consultation with a primary care provider or OB-GYN



#### DEHYDRATION HEADACHE

**CAUSES:** Exposure to excessive heat, not drinking enough water

**WHAT CAN HELP:** Plenty of water, rest, anti-inflammatory or pain reliever. Avoid headache medicines with caffeine.



#### CLUSTER HEADACHE

**CAUSES:** This is a rare disorder, and the causes are still unknown

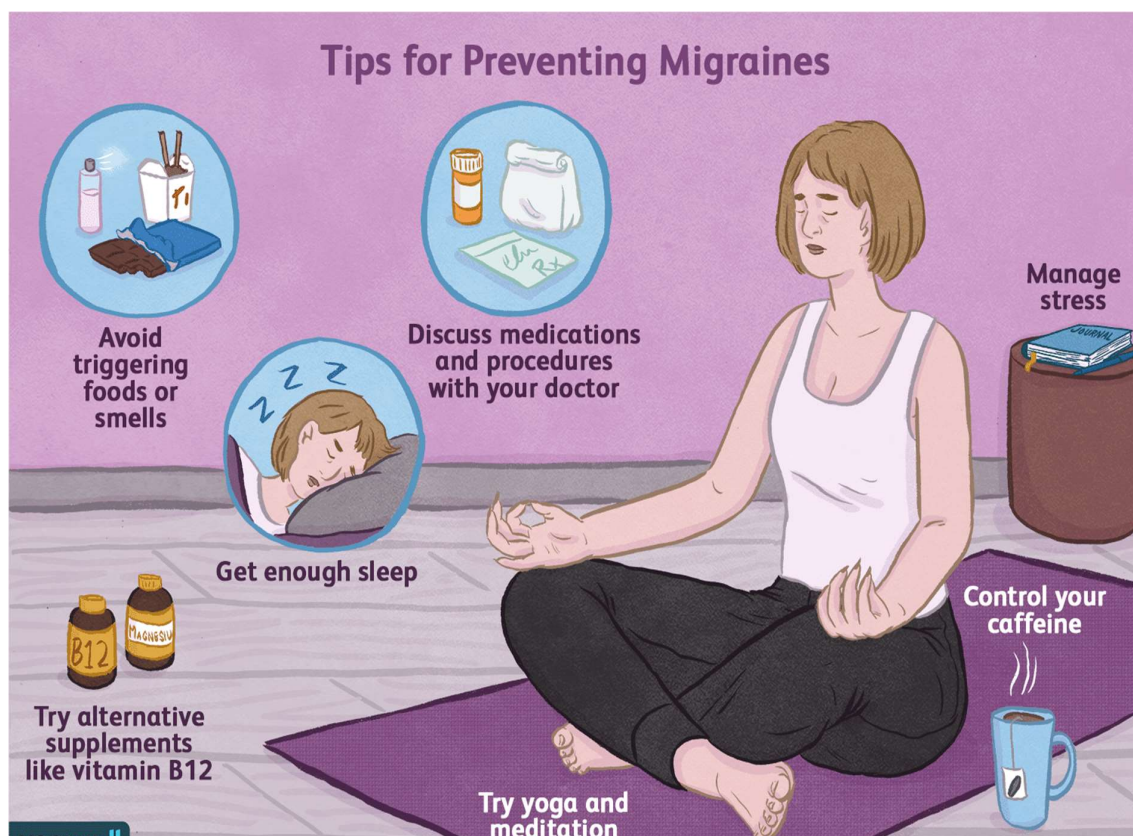
**WHAT CAN HELP:**  
Consultation with a primary care provider

## Prevention of Migraine

Preventing migraines often involves a combination of lifestyle changes, medication, and identifying and avoiding triggers. Here are some strategies that can help:

### 1. Lifestyle Modifications:

- **Regular Sleep Schedule:** Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.
- **Healthy Diet:** Eat balanced meals at regular times; avoid skipping meals.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water throughout the day.
- **Exercise Regularly:** Moderate, consistent exercise can help reduce migraine frequency.
- **Stress Management:** Techniques like meditation, yoga, deep breathing, and mindfulness can be beneficial.



### 2. Identify and Avoid Triggers:

Migraines can be triggered by a variety of factors, which may vary from person to person. Identifying and managing these triggers can significantly reduce the frequency and severity of migraine attacks. Common migraine triggers include:

#### 1. Stress

Emotional stress is a significant trigger for many individuals with migraines. Managing stress through relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga, or deep-breathing exercises can be beneficial.



## **Common Migraine Triggers**

Additives

Alcohol

Artificial sweeteners (e.g., aspartame)

Caffeine (overconsumption or acute withdrawal from regular use)

Delayed/missed meals

Exercise

Foods (e.g., chocolate, soft cheese)

Light

Menses

Odors (e.g., perfumes)

Oral contraceptives

Psychiatric comorbidities

Red wine

Sleep disturbances (e.g., obstructive sleep apnea, insomnia)

Smoke

Stress

Weather changes

## **2. Sleep Patterns**

Both lack of sleep and excessive sleep can lead to migraines. Maintaining a consistent sleep schedule is crucial.

## **3. Hormonal Changes**

Fluctuations in hormones, especially in women, can influence migraine occurrence. Migraines often coincide with menstrual cycles, pregnancy, or menopause.

## **4. Dietary Factors**

Certain foods and beverages are known to trigger migraines in some individuals. Common dietary triggers include:

- Alcohol: Especially red wine.
- Caffeine: Found in coffee, tea, and some sodas.
- Aged Cheeses: Such as cheddar and blue cheese.
- Processed Meats: Containing nitrates, like hot dogs and salami.
- Foods Containing MSG: Found in some processed foods.
- Artificial Sweeteners: Such as aspartame.
- Chocolate: Contains caffeine and beta-phenylethylamine.

## **5. Sensory Stimuli**

Bright or flashing lights, loud sounds, and strong smells can serve as migraine triggers. Limiting exposure to these stimuli may help prevent attacks.

## **6. Weather and Environmental Changes**

Changes in weather conditions, such as barometric pressure shifts, can trigger migraines. While it's challenging to control weather-related triggers, being aware of them can help in planning preventive measures.

## **7. Physical Factors**

Overexertion or intense physical activity can lead to migraines. It's advisable to engage in regular, moderate exercise and avoid sudden, strenuous activities.

## **8. Medications**

Some medications may have side effects that include triggering migraines. Consulting with a healthcare provider about medication side effects is essential.

## **9. Skipping Meals**

Not eating regularly or skipping meals can lead to low blood sugar, which may trigger a migraine. Eating balanced meals at regular intervals is recommended.

## **10. Dehydration**

Insufficient fluid intake can lead to dehydration, a known migraine trigger. Ensuring adequate hydration throughout the day is important.

## **11. Sensory Overload**

Exposure to strong odours, such as perfumes, paint, or secondhand smoke, can trigger migraines in some individuals. Being mindful of environmental scents may help in prevention.

## 12. Traveling

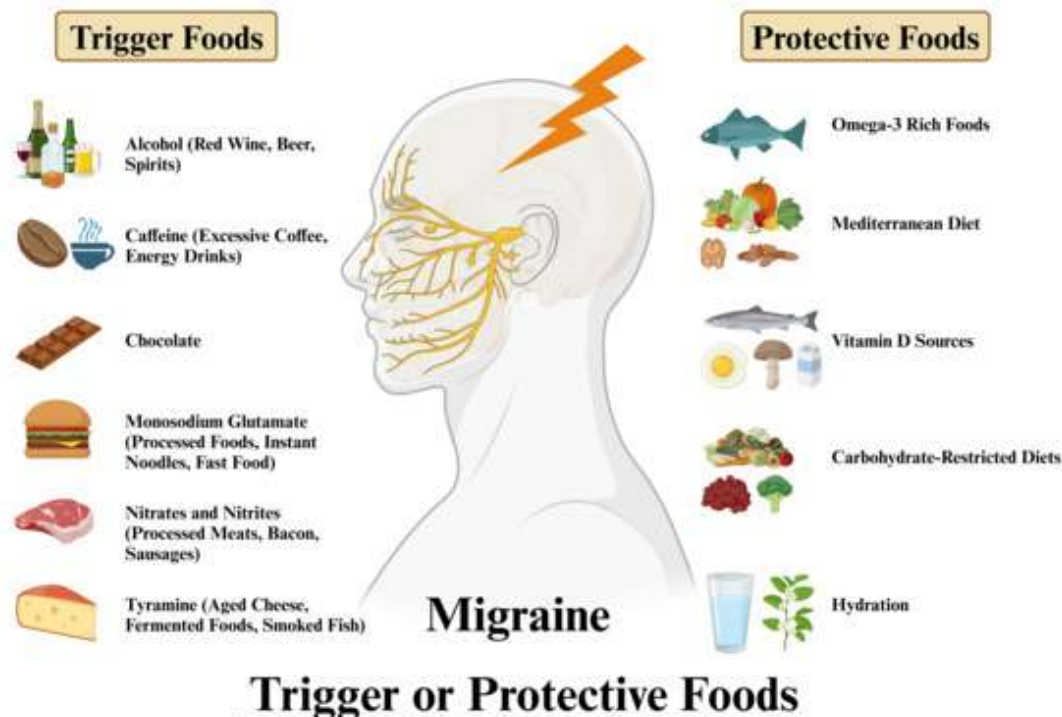
Travel-related factors, such as changes in time zones, sleep disruptions, and exposure to different environmental conditions, can trigger migraines. Planning ahead and maintaining routines during travel can help mitigate these risks.

### Managing Triggers:

Keeping a **Migraine Diary** can be an effective way to identify personal triggers. By recording daily activities, food intake, sleep patterns, and migraine occurrences, individuals can pinpoint patterns and make necessary adjustments. These days some **Mobile Apps** are also available, which can act as migraine diary.

## 3. Dietary Adjustments:

- Low Tyramine Diet: Avoid aged cheeses, cured meats, fermented foods, and soy products.
- Low Sodium & Preservative-Free Foods: Processed foods with high salt and preservatives can trigger migraines.
- Regular Meal Times: Skipping meals can cause blood sugar drops, triggering migraines.



## 4. Medication for Prevention:

- Prescription Medications: Beta-blockers (like propranolol), calcium channel blockers, antidepressants (amitriptyline) and anti-seizure drugs (topiramate)

- Over-the-Counter Options: Some people benefit from supplements like magnesium, riboflavin, or CoQ10 (under medical supervision).

#### 4. **Regular Health Check-ups:**

Manage Other Health Conditions: Conditions like high blood pressure, sleep disorders, and depression can influence migraine frequency.

#### 5. **Biofeedback and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT):**

- Biofeedback: Helps control bodily functions like heart rate and muscle tension.
- CBT: Can help manage stress and reduce migraine frequency.

#### 6. **Migraine-Friendly Environment**

- Lighting: Use dim lighting and avoid fluorescent lights. Blue light filters on screens can help reduce eye strain.
- Noise: Reduce exposure to loud noises or use noise-cancelling headphones in noisy environments.
- Temperature Control: Keep your environment cool; some people are sensitive to heat or sudden temperature changes.

#### **When to See a Doctor:**

If your migraines are frequent, severe, or changing in pattern, consult a healthcare provider. They can rule out other conditions and recommend appropriate treatments.

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