Migraine Headache

A migraine is very bad pain on one or both sides of your head. The cause of a migraine is not always known.

HOME CARE

- Many medicines can help migraine pain or keep migraines from coming back. Your doctor can help you decide on a medicine or treatment program.
- If you or your child gets a migraine, it may help to lie down in a dark, quiet room.
- Keep a headache journal. This may help find out what is causing the headaches. For example, write down:
  - What you eat and drink.
  - How much sleep you get.
  - Any change to your diet or medicines.

MIGRAINE SYMPTOMS

- Sometimes, an aura can occur before you get a migraine. An aura is a group of problems (*symptoms*) that can predict a migraine. These can include:
  - Seeing flashing lights, bright spots, or zig-zag lines.
  - Tunnel vision.
  - Trouble talking.
  - Feelings of numbness.
  - Muscle weakness.

- A migraine includes one or more of the following problems:
  - Pain on one or both sides of the head.
  - Pain that feels like pounding or throbbing inside the head.
  - Pain that is bad enough to keep you from doing daily activities.
  - Feeling sick to your stomach (*nauseous*).
  - Throwing up (*vomiting*).
  - Pain with exposure to bright lights, loud noises, or activity.

MIGRAINE TRIGGERS

A migraine can be "triggered" or caused by different things, such as:

- Alcohol.
- Smoking.
- Stress.
- Your period (*female menstruation*) may be related.
- Aged cheeses.
- Foods or drinks that contain nitrates, glutamate, aspartame, or tyramine.
- Lack of sleep.
- Chocolate.
- Caffeine.
- Hunger.
- Medicines, such as nitroglycerine (used to treat chest pain), birth control pills, estrogen, and some blood pressure medicines.

DIAGNOSIS

- A migraine headache is often diagnosed based on:
  - Symptoms.
  - Physical exam.
  - A CT scan of the head. This may be ordered to see if the headaches are caused by other medical problems.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- The medicine you or your child was given does not work.
- The pain begins again.
- The neck is stiff.
- You or your child is having trouble seeing.
- The muscles are weak or you or your child loses muscle control.
- There are new, very bad symptoms.
- You or your child loses balance.
- You or your child has trouble walking.
- You or your child feels faint or passes out.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch this condition.
- Will get help right away if you or your child is not doing well or gets worse.

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