

# Migraines

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# Objectives

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- Students should be able to list symptoms of a migraine
- Students should be able to list some risk factors of migraines
- Students should be able to tell the difference between a migraine and a regular headache

# Definition

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- A migraine is a very painful neurological condition of which the most common symptom is a very intense headache. Usually the headache is on one side of the brain.



# Cause

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- o Originally, it was thought that migraines were caused by abnormalities of blood vessel systems in the head.
- o Today, experts think it is from constricting blood vessels in the head
- o Or a problem in the cells that send electrical ions
- o Or hormone fluctuations



# Risk Factors

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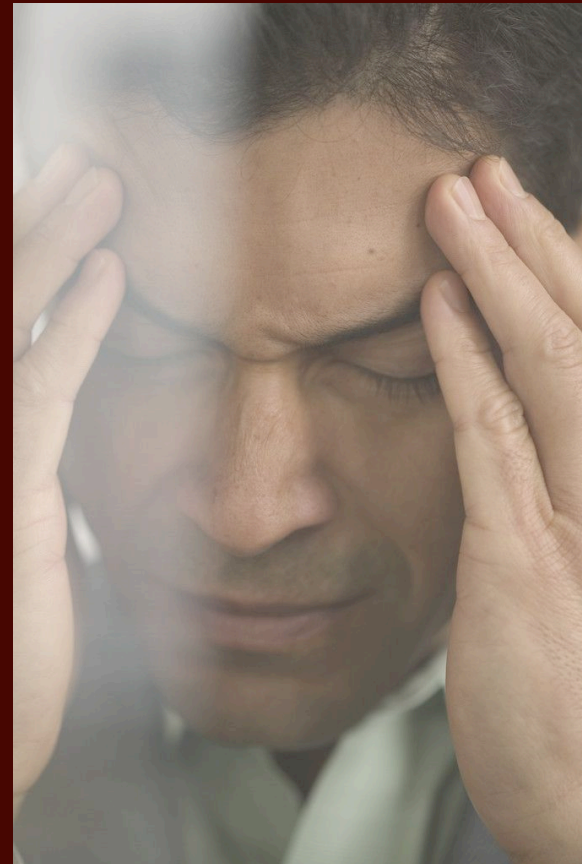
- Emotional stress
- Low or high blood pressure
- Physical exertion
- Lack of sleep
- Sudden weather changes
- Bright lights
- High altitudes
- Low sugar levels
- Certain foods (cheese, chocolate, alcohol, fatty foods)
- Travel motion
- Hormones
- Medication



# Symptoms

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- Pain on one side or both sides of the head or pain in the lower back part of the head
- Sensitivity to light and sound
- Nausea with or without vomiting
- Auras
- Blurred vision
- Seeing flashing or twinkling lights
- Tingling sensations in the limbs
- Cravings for sweets
- Being thirsty
- Feeling depressed
- Irritability
- Drowsiness



# Treatment

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Two types of treatments are available

One to reduce the pain

The other medication is to prevent the occurrence of migraines



# Prevention

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- Prevention in the form of medications
  - cardiovascular drugs or beta blockers reduce the strength of a migraine
  - Antidepressants and anti-seizure medications are also effective in preventing migraines.





# Statistics

- Migraines affect 28 million Americans, roughly 21 million are women
- Half of migraine sufferers get their first migraine by the age 20
- About 57% of neurologists get migraines sometime in their life
- 85% of migraine sufferers have reported something that trigger the migraines
  - Up to 50% weather
  - 40% missing a meal
  - 50% stress
  - 50% alcohol





# Review Questions

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1. A migraine usually happens on one side of the head. T F
2. Lack of sleep and bright lights are risk factors for migraines. T F
3. Blinking lights is a symptom of a migraine. T F
4. Experts think that migraines might be caused by constricting blood vessels in the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. What foods might be risk factors for migraines?