

MIGRAINE ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND



Migraine Diary

Using your Migraine Diary



The Migraine Diary is a simple but effective way of managing your migraine. It can help you to establish certain patterns in your attacks.

Perhaps you get most of your headaches at weekends or perhaps every time you are presented with deadlines at work or at home. These examples would be quite easy to notice but most people's headaches are not as easy to predict.

Attacks may only be triggered by a certain combination of trigger factors, say when you miss a meal AND experience stress. Either factor on their own may not be enough to trigger an attack, but when combined, they do. Using the diary systematically for a period of time may establish some patterns to your headaches and may enable you to take action to prevent them or manage them better. It can also help you to feel more in control and this, in itself can also reduce the frequency of the attacks.

The diary will also act to show your doctor how much an impact that Migraine has on your life. Whenever you visit your doctor, you should bring your diary along, as

it will help him/her to implement a specific treatment plan for you.

The diary is set out for 12 months of 31 days. Start by filling in the month on top of the page. When you get an attack, find the corresponding date and fill in the row across as fully as you can, going back up to 72 hours before the onset of the attack. Because there is not much room here, we suggest that you use abbreviations to record the attacks. For example, under the heading of 'Other Symptoms', you could use 'V' for 'Visual distortions' or 'V30' for 'Visual Distortions lasting 30 minutes'. 'N' could represent 'Nausea' and 'L' could represent 'Sensitivity to Light'. You can make a note of the abbreviations that you use on the inside back cover as well as any other notes you may need. There is also a space for monthly notes on the back of each diary page.

Under 'Medication', don't forget to include ALL medication that you have taken, including aspirin, paracetamol, triptans etc. Again, abbreviate the name of the drug for simplicity – 'P' for paracetamol for example. You can apply the same principle to all of the information and come up with a system that works for you.

When rating your 'Ability to Function', 1 means that your headache has had no real impact on your ability to carry out a normal day, while 5 represents an attack so debilitating that you were unable to go about your business as normal at all – perhaps you were confined to bed etc.

In the medication section, note down in 'Dosage' what you have taken in total for that day and record any improvements as well as side effects under 'Effects'.

There are countless potential trigger factors and they differ for everybody, so you will have to pay close attention to lifestyle, environmental and dietary factors in the 48 hours preceding the attack. Some of the most common triggers include:

Lack of food, missed meals, delayed meals, specific foods (commonly cheese, coffee, citrus foods, fizzy drinks to name a few), onset of menstruation, noise, strong smells, stress, anxiety, lack of/too much sleep, excess exercise, travel, excitement, bad news, light, changes in weather, fatigue and alcohol.

Remember, the list is not exclusive. Remember also that food is not the only aspect that you should watch carefully. The vast majority of attacks (about 80%) are brought on by non-dietary factors. Make a note of anything that you may even vaguely suspect using your own list of abbreviations.

The diary also monitors the success or failure of treatments and medications. Have the attacks become less frequent since you started taking a certain medicine? Are they less severe? Are there side effects? The diary provides you and your GP with a tool to answer all these questions if you use it accurately.

CALL-SAVE HELPLINE
1850 200 378

(10.00 – 4.30, Monday to Friday)

Address: The Migraine Association
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All Hallows College,
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If lost please contact:

Name _____

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