

LIVING WELL WITH MIGRAINE

**YOUTH EDITION
12-17 YEARS**



**A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING AND
MANAGING MIGRAINE WITH CONFIDENCE**





LIVING WELL WITH MIGRAINE

A GUIDE TO MANAGEMENT, SUPPORT, AND RESOURCES



Wellness

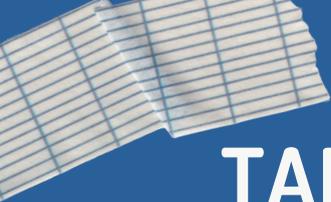
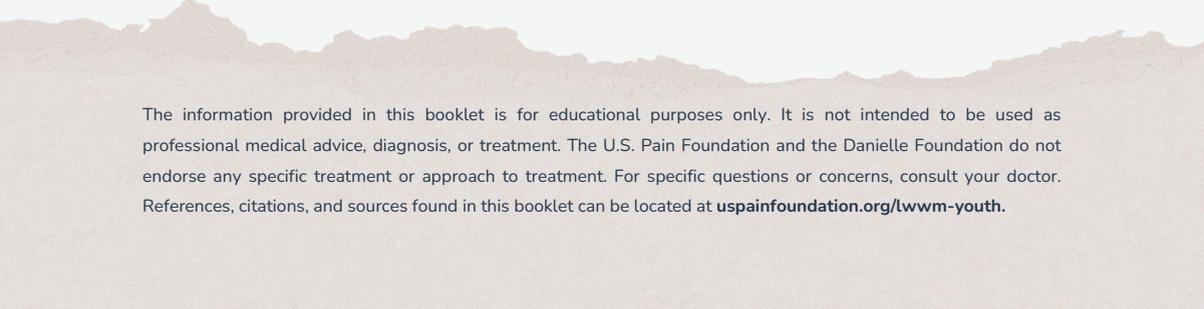


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The information provided in this booklet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to be used as professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. The U.S. Pain Foundation and the Danielle Foundation do not endorse any specific treatment or approach to treatment. For specific questions or concerns, consult your doctor. References, citations, and sources found in this booklet can be located at uspainfoundation.org/lwmm-youth.



What Is Migraine?

Migraine is not just a bad headache, it is a brain condition that can affect your whole body. When you have a migraine, you might feel a strong, pounding or throbbing pain on one side of your head or across your whole forehead. These attacks can last for a few hours or even a couple of days. They can mess with your plans, make it hard to focus, and affect your mood.

Migraine exists on a spectrum in terms of frequency:

- **Episodic migraine:** when symptoms happen on fewer than 15 days each month.
- **Chronic migraine:** when symptoms happen on 15 or more days each month.

You are not alone! Migraine is more common than you think. According to the National Institutes of Health, 10% of school-age kids and 28% of teens have migraine.

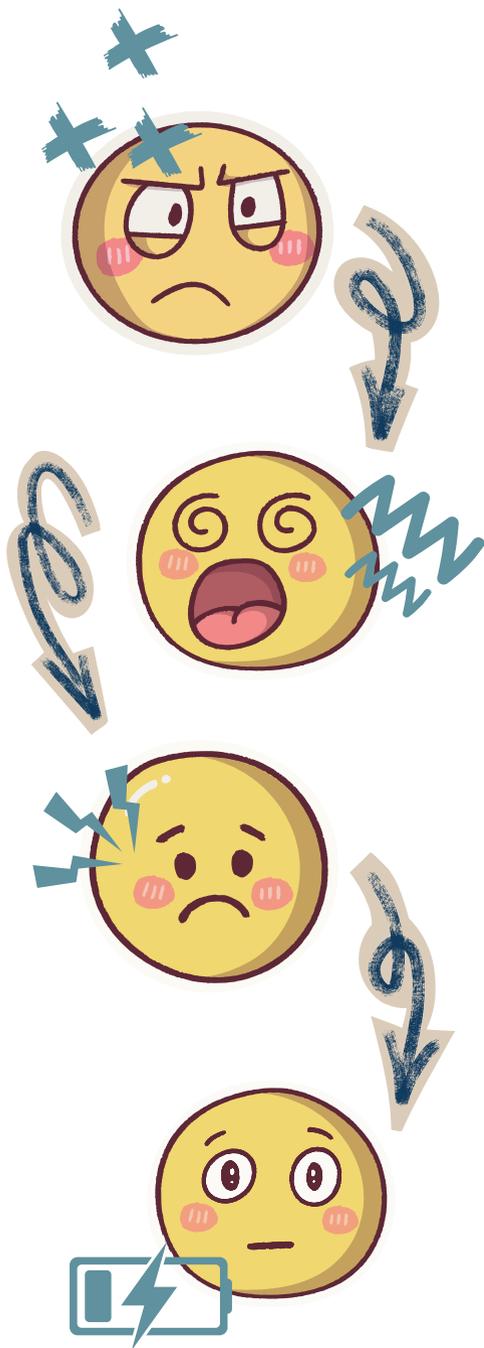


Common Migraine Symptoms

Everyone's migraine experience is a little different, but here are some things you might feel:

- **Head pain:** You might feel like a throbbing or pounding pain, often on one side of your head.
- **Aura:** Before a migraine starts, you might see flashing lights, zigzag lines, or feel weird things like tingling or numbness.
- **Nausea and vomiting:** Your stomach might feel really upset, and sometimes you might even throw up. Some people have migraine that is just this—it's called Abdominal Migraine.
- **Light and sound sensitivity:** Bright lights or loud noises can make everything worse.
- **Dizziness:** You might feel lightheaded, off balance, or like the room is spinning.
- **Neck pain:** Your neck might feel tight, stiff, or sore during a migraine.

Migraine Phases



Migraine attacks usually move through a few different stages. You might experience all of them, or only some. The time between attacks is called the interictal phase—basically your “in-between” period.

Prodrome (the warning stage): This can happen a day or two before a migraine hits. You might notice things feel “off,” like your mood changing, craving certain foods, feeling extra tired or stiff, or being more sensitive to light or sound.

Aura (the sensory stage): Not everyone gets this, but if you do, it’s a short period where your senses act differently. You might see flashing lights or have blurry vision, notice strange smells or sounds, or have trouble finding words.

Acute (the attack stage): This is when the migraine pain shows up. It can last for hours—or sometimes even longer. You might feel intense head pain, nausea, or be extra sensitive to light, noise, or strong smells. Aura symptoms can continue here, too.

Postdrome (the recovery stage): After the pain fades, many people feel wiped out or foggy for a day or so. You might have low energy, trouble concentrating, or a mild headache lingering in the background.



Abdominal Migraine

When Migraine Affects Your Stomach Instead of Your Head

Did you know that migraine isn't just about head pain? Some people—especially kids and teens—experience a type called abdominal migraine, which mostly causes stomach pain.

WHAT IS ABDOMINAL MIGRAINE?

Abdominal migraine causes episodes of belly pain that can be pretty strong—usually around your belly button. These episodes can last anywhere from a few hours to three days. The pain might feel dull, sore, or achy, and can make it hard to do your daily activities like school, sports, or hanging out with friends and family.

WHO GETS IT?

Abdominal migraine is most common in younger kids (10 years and younger), but teens and even adults can have it too. It's more common in girls than boys. If someone in your family gets migraine headaches, you might be more likely to experience abdominal migraine.

What are the symptoms?

Headache, sometimes along with stomach pain.

Pale skin like you look a bit washed out.

Not feeling hungry, even if you usually are.

Belly pain around the center of your stomach.

Nausea or vomiting, you might feel sick to your stomach or throw up.

Sensitivity to light or sound, where bright lights or loud noises might bother you more than usual.

These episodes can come on suddenly and go away just as fast. Between episodes, you'll likely feel totally fine, for weeks or even months.

Some kids may experience Cyclical Vomiting Syndrome with episodes of vomiting several times an hour over a period of hours or days.





What Can Cause Migraine and What Might Trigger It?

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE GET MIGRAINE?

Doctors do not know the exact cause of migraine, but they do know some things that make it more likely:

- **It runs in families.** If one parent has migraine, your chances are about 50% AND if both parents do, it's closer to 75%, based on a recent study of migraine in families.
- **Hormones can play a role.** Changes during puberty or your period can make migraine more likely or intense.
- **Brain chemistry matters.** Shifts in brain chemicals like serotonin can trigger migraine.
- **Your surroundings can be triggers.** Bright lights, loud sounds, strong smells, or even changes in the weather can sometimes bring on a migraine.



If you're starting to wonder whether what you're feeling might be migraine, take a look at "I Think I May Have Migraine" on the Migraine at School student page. It's a quick, easy guide to help you make sense of your symptoms: migraineatschool.org/students

WHAT CAN TRIGGER A MIGRAINE ATTACK?

Triggers are things that might start a migraine attack. Common ones include:

- **Stress:** Feeling really worried, overwhelmed, or even super excited.
- **Sleep changes:** Not getting enough sleep or sleeping too much.
- **Eating habits:** Skipping meals or eating certain foods.
- **Environment:** Bright lights, loud sounds, or strong smells.
- **Weather:** Sudden changes in weather, like shifts in temperature or humidity.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU HAVE MIGRAINE?

Doctors usually figure out if you have migraine by asking questions about how you're feeling. They might ask things like:

- What does your head pain feel like?
- How often does it happen?
- Do you ever feel sick, dizzy, or bothered by light or sound?

Sometimes, they'll send you to a specialist, but most of the time, they just need to understand your symptoms.

Managing Migraine: What Can Help?

Everyone's different—what works for your best friend might not work for you. And that's OK! The most important thing is to keep trying and **figure out what helps YOU feel better**. Remember, you're not alone. Lots of people your age live with migraine and understand what it's like.



TIPS FOR MANAGING MIGRAINE

- **Keep learning:** The more you understand, the more confident you'll feel.
- **Speak up at doctor visits:** It's your body—don't be afraid to ask questions or bring notes. A parent or guardian can help, too.
- **See a specialist if you can:** They might have ideas or know of treatments that your regular doctor doesn't know about.
- **Stay organized:** Keep track of your attacks—how you feel and what helps.
- **Stick to a routine:** Try to get regular sleep, meals, and hydration.
- **Treat early:** Take action as soon as symptoms start.
- **Take care of your feelings, too:** Talk to someone you trust, and try calming activities like deep breathing or journaling.
- **Try non-medication options:** Things like yoga, green light therapy, or massage can sometimes help.
- **Team up with your doctor:** Ask about safe supplements or tools that might make a difference.



Treatment Options

There are lots of ways to manage migraine—and what works best can be different for everyone. Most people use a combination of tools, like medication, calming strategies, and self-care. Talk with your parent or doctor to figure out what's best for you.

SELF-CARE TOOLS

- Cold/Hot packs
- Drinking water
- Earplugs
- Eating regular meals
- FL-41 lenses (special tinted glasses that filter light to reduce migraine triggers)
- Ginger tea or chews
- Green light lamp
- Keeping a daily routine
- Resting in a dark, quiet room
- Using relaxation tools
- Writing down symptoms (migraine diary or app)

Also, take breaks from screens and use blue light filters if screens bother your eyes.

MOVEMENT AND THERAPY

- Breathing techniques
- Massage or physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Walking or gentle movement
- Yoga or stretching

NATURAL/ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- Acupressure or acupuncture
- Chiropractic care
- Essential oils
- Supplements like magnesium or vitamin B2

It is important to check with a doctor first before taking any supplements.

MIND-BODY APPROACHES

- Biofeedback
- Meditation or mindfulness
- Peer support groups*
- Talk therapy
- Virtual reality tools for pain or stress relief

Hey guess what?! We have **FREE** mental health resources for you. You can sign up at migraineatschool.org/lifestyle

***And a teen peer support group. Info on page 12!!**



Treatment Options

MEDICATION OPTIONS

1. Acute (used during a migraine attack):

- Pain relievers: ibuprofen, naproxen, acetaminophen
- Triptans (such as sumatriptan or rizatriptan): special migraine medicines that help stop an attack early
- Anti-nausea medicines (such as metoclopramide, ondansetron, or promethazine): help when your stomach feels upset during a migraine

2. Preventive (taken on a regular schedule to reduce attacks):

- Supplements like magnesium, riboflavin (B2), feverfew, CoQ10
- Prescription options
 - Amitriptyline
 - Beta-blockers
 - Cyproheptadine
 - Anti-seizure medications (topiramate & divalproex sodium)
- CGRP blockers - Ajoovy (Fremanezumab is currently the only CGRP medicine approved to help prevent episodic migraine in kids and teens ages 6–17. Your doctor can explain if it might be right for you. Medicine is always changing, so be sure to double-check with your healthcare provider for the most up-to-date options.)

NERVE BLOCKS

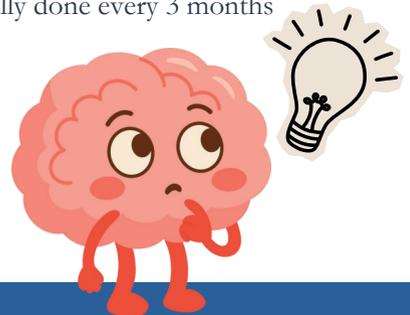
A nerve block is a quick procedure where a doctor gives you an injection (a shot) in the back of your head or neck. It targets nerves that send pain signals.

- Includes numbing medicine (and sometimes a calming medicine)
- Takes just a few minutes
- Can help stop or reduce migraine attacks for days or weeks
- Sometimes used when other treatments haven't worked

BOTULINUM TOXIN INJECTIONS

This treatment is approved for adults 18+ with chronic migraine (15 or more headache days per month), but some doctors may offer off-label to teens with chronic migraine.

- A series of tiny injections in the head and neck
- Helps “turn down” the pain signals
- Usually done every 3 months



REMEMBER - Migraine can change over time. What works for you now may need adjusting later—and that's completely normal. Your health care provider can help update your treatment plan as your needs change.

Treatment Options

Devices That Help

There are wearable devices designed to treat or prevent migraine attacks by sending gentle electrical or magnetic pulses to nerves that affect migraine. These are non-drug, non-invasive tools.



Non-invasive vagus nerve stimulation gammaCore (nVNS)

- FDA-approved for people ages 12 and older with migraine and cluster headaches
- Held to the neck to stimulate the vagus nerve
- Can be used during an attack or daily to prevent attacks
- Must be prescribed by a doctor



Remote electrical neuromodulation Nerivio REN wearable

- FDA-approved for people ages 8 and older with migraine
- Worn on the upper arm and activated via an app
- Uses remote electrical neuromodulation (REN) to block pain signals
- Use it during the first signs of an attack
- Must be prescribed by a doctor



Transcranial magnetic stimulation Savi (TMS)

- FDA-approved for people ages 12 and older with migraine
- A portable magnetic device held to the back of the head
- Uses single-pulse transcranial magnetic stimulation (sTMS) to calm brain activity linked to migraine
- Can be used for prevention and acute treatment
- Must be prescribed by a doctor



Self-Management Strategies

Self-management means learning ways to take care of yourself to manage migraine and hopefully prevent attacks. It's about small steps that can make a big difference.

Track What's Going On

Keep a migraine diary or use a free app. Track when attacks happen, how you feel, what you ate, and how you slept. This will help you and your doctor find patterns. There are even apps you can use to help with this, like Migraine Buddy or Migraine Insight.

Rest and Pacing

When you feel a migraine coming, rest early and take your medication. Use a cold pack, lie down, and create a calm space. Don't overdo it—pacing yourself can help prevent symptoms from getting worse.

Move Your Body (Gently!)

Movement may help reduce migraine over time. Choose gentle activities like walking, stretching, or yoga. You do not need to do a lot—just find what feels good to you.

Smart Sleep Habits

Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day—even weekends. Turn off screens at least 30 minutes before bed. Make your room cool, quiet, and comfy.

Stress Hacks

Feeling stressed can make migraine attacks worse. Try things like deep breathing, journaling, mindfulness apps, or art. It is totally okay to talk to someone—a parent, school counselor, or therapist—if you're feeling overwhelmed.



The Danielle Foundation
has free yoga classes
curated for migraine.

Emotional Well-Being

Food, Drinks, and Supplements

Eat regular meals with healthy foods.

Drink plenty of water. Try to stay away from things that might trigger a migraine attack—like processed snacks, energy drinks, caffeine, or artificial sweeteners.

And always ask your doctor before trying any supplements or vitamins.

Yes – Real Food. Fruits and vegetables, whole grains, water, chicken, beef, and fish are the foods that fuel your brain. They keep you hydrated, give you steady energy, and can help you keep your migraine under control.

No – Junk Food. Foods like super salty chips, energy drinks, diet sodas, and snacks with lots of artificial colors or sweeteners might taste good for a moment, but they can be tough on your brain. These processed foods can trigger attacks, drain your energy, and leave you feeling worse instead of better.

Find Joy & Be Kind to Yourself

Do things that make you happy—play games, listen to music, hang out with friends, draw, write, or chill with a pet. On tough days, be gentle with yourself. You're doing your best.



Migraine does not just affect your body—it can impact your emotions, too. You might feel frustrated, left out, worried, or sad. That is totally normal, and you're not alone.

Mental Health and Migraine

Living with migraine can increase your chances of feeling anxious or down. That's why it's really important to take care of your mental health, just like you take care of your body.

Ways to Take Care of Your Mental Health

- Talk to someone you trust—like a parent, teacher, coach, or friend
- Try therapy (like CBT, ACT, or biofeedback) to learn helpful ways to cope
- Use calming tools like deep breathing, music, or mindfulness apps
- Journal your thoughts, make art, or spend time in nature
- Join peer support groups or youth programs for people with migraine or pain

Remember : Your pain is real, and so are your feelings—they matter



Resources and Help

You're not alone. It can be tough living with migraine, but there are people and places that get it and want to help. Whether you're looking for info, connection, or just someone who understands, check out these great resources:



The Danielle Byron Henry Migraine Foundation offers more than just migraine relief, it provides essential mental-health and wellness support as part of its comprehensive mission. Whether you're a student, parent, or living with migraine as an adult, the Danielle Foundation can help.

daniellefoundation.org



Pediatric Pain Warrior Program: U.S. Pain Foundation's Pediatric Pain Warrior Program gives children living with chronic pain, and their families, a safe space to connect, access resources, and find support through free summer camps, family-friendly events, and educational workshops.

uspainfoundation.org/pediatricpainwarriors

Additional Resources

- Meg Foundation: megfoundationforpain.org
- Miles for Migraine: milesformigraine.org
- Migraine.com: migraine.com
- Migraine Again: migraineagain.com
- Shades for Migraine: shadesformigraine.org

In crisis or need someone to talk to?

Call or text 988, or text HOME to 741741, for free confidential support, anytime.



FIND SUPPORT!! Join other teens who are also navigating pain.



Parents, we have a support group for you too! Sign up today!

painconnection.org/teen-pain-support-group

painconnection.org/parents-group

About Migraine at School

Migraine at School is the foundational initiative of the Danielle Byron Henry Migraine Foundation that helps students, families, and schools understand migraine and its impact on learning and life. Our program is trusted by nearly 5,000 schools across the country.

We offer:

- A free CE-accredited course on pediatric migraine for school nurses
- Practical tools for care planning and accommodations
- Free videos, tip sheets, and downloadable school resources
- Student- and family-focused events and workshops
- Opportunities to connect with a national community of nurses supporting students with migraine

We also believe wellness is a powerful part of managing migraine, which is why we created our Wellness for Migraine program. It includes three supportive pillars:

- Move: Restorative yoga and gentle movement
- Breathe: Short mindfulness and breathing practices
- Nourish: Simple, approachable nutrition guidance

Migraine at School is here to support you, and the thousands of schools we partner with, every step of the way.

Learn more at migraineatschool.org

About U.S. Pain Foundation

The U.S. Pain Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people with chronic illnesses or serious injuries that cause pain. We offer free programs and services like:

- INvisible Project: A magazine sharing stories of people living with chronic pain, including teens and young adults.
- Advocacy: We're your voice on the front lines, working with lawmakers to make pain care more accessible and affordable.
- Pain Connection: Free online peer support groups, including a teen group, led by trained facilitators who understand what you're going through. Another group is for parents and guardians or other people who help take care of you.
- Pediatric Pain Warrior Program: Helps children, teens, and families through a summer camp, retreats, workshops, and more.
- Building Your Toolbox: You and your parents or guardians can learn valuable pain management tips and tricks through our monthly educational series.
- MyPainPlan: An interactive site to explore treatment categories and build a personalized list of treatment options to discuss with your doctors.
- Storybank: A place to share YOUR story and help others like you feel less alone.
- Volunteer Network: A team of people spreading awareness about chronic pain and the importance of looking out for each other.

Learn more at uspainfoundation.org

