



# Migraine

*One in seven people  
in the UK have migraine,  
a complex, severe  
and painful long term  
health condition.*

the  
**migraine**  
trust

It is still not known why people get migraine. Scientists and doctors think it is the result of abnormal brain activity affecting nerve signals, chemicals and blood vessels in the brain. We don't know what causes this brain activity, although for up to 60% of people with migraine there is a possible link to their genes, making them more sensitive to changes in their environment. That's why migraine often runs in families. Although migraine involves the brain, it is not believed to cause brain damage or stroke. These are more likely linked to lifestyle factors that can increase risk in anyone, such as high blood pressure, being overweight and smoking.

## Migraine

Migraine is a severe and painful long-term health condition. If you have migraine you will have migraine attacks when you may not be able to function normally. Your experience of migraine will be unique to you.

Different people get different symptoms during a migraine attack. These can include:

- head pain
- problems with your sight such as seeing flashing lights
- being very sensitive to light, sounds and smells
- fatigue
- feeling sick and being sick.

Migraine attacks can last between four hours and three days.

Most people don't have any symptoms in between migraine attacks.

## Are there different types of migraine?

Doctors use an international classification system to diagnose and treat migraine.

The most common types of migraine fall into two categories:

- migraine without aura
- migraine with aura.



## How do you treat migraine?

Migraine is complex and there are different treatments available. The right treatment for you will depend on the type of migraine you have, your symptoms, how often you have attacks and how bad they are. It will also depend on your medical history.

Acute treatment can include painkillers and anti-sickness medication to help stop or shorten an attack once it starts. Preventive medication is usually taken every day to reduce the frequency and severity of attacks.

Treatment can involve reviewing any lifestyle factors or triggers that may contribute to your attacks, such as stress, changes in routine and sleep patterns. There is currently no cure for migraine.

## What is a trigger?

A trigger is something that happens to you, or something that you do, which seems to result in you having a migraine attack.

The migraine attack may start anywhere between six hours and two days after the trigger happens.

## Common triggers

Common triggers of migraine attacks include being hungry or thirsty, feeling stressed or changes to your usual routine. As there are many things that could be triggers, keeping a migraine diary can help you to identify your triggers.

## Who are we?

The Migraine Trust is dedicated to helping people affected by migraine. We are the only UK migraine charity providing information and support, campaigning for awareness and change, and funding and promoting research.

One in seven people in the UK live with migraine, and this complex and debilitating neurological disorder significantly affects their lives. We have been leading and bringing the migraine community together to change this since 1965.

Our website and helplines provide information and support on all aspects of migraine and help to manage it at work, in education, and in accessing healthcare.

We campaign for increased awareness and understanding of migraine, and national policy change to improve the lives of people who get it. We also fund medical research into migraine.

## How can we help you?

We're here for you if you have any questions or concerns around migraine.

The Migraine Trust can be contacted on **0808 808 0066** (Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm) or through our contact form and Live chat service found on our website at **migrainetrust.org** or by emailing **info@migrainetrust.org**.

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