

# Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication



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## National Headache Awareness Week is June 5-11



Each year, the National Headache Foundation promotes National Headache Awareness Week in an effort to educate the public about the impact and severity of headaches, and to support America's 45 million headache sufferers. This year's theme is "Stop Migraines Before They Stop You."

Migraines affect one in every four households in America – 28 million people. Out of these sufferers, 11 million suffer from modestly to severely debilitating migraines.

### Prevention Goals

The goals of migraine prevention are to reduce the frequency, severity and duration of migraines, improve the ability to carry out daily activities, and to improve the response to medicine as the migraines occur. These goals can realistically be achieved so migraines don't alter the quality of life for sufferers.

### Ten Steps For Better Communication

In order to effectively treat migraine patients, health care providers need

to know certain information. A panel of leading headache specialists convened for the National Headache Foundation to identify ten steps that would help them successfully treat migraine patients:

- Seek help. Be a self-advocate.
- Educate yourself about migraines so you will know what to communicate to a physician.
- Visit a doctor specifically about your headaches.
- Prepare for a dialogue with your physician. Keep a headache diary.
- Have reasonable expectations about treatment. Understand there is no cure for migraines, but the disease can be managed with an effective treatment program.
- Be honest about all current medications and other medical conditions.

- Focus on solutions. Be positive.
- Ask for detailed instructions for taking medication – and follow them.
- Partner with your physician for treatment success. See your physician on a regular basis and develop a relationship.
- Follow-up regularly with your physician. Your treatment program will only be as good as the time you invest.

### What Causes Migraines?

Many factors can trigger migraine attacks such as missing or delaying a meal; alteration of sleep-wake cycles; daily or near-daily use of medications designed for relieving headache attacks; medications that cause a swelling of the blood vessels; bright lights, sunlight, and fluorescent lights; TV and movie viewing; certain foods; and excessive noise.

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## Migraine Characteristics

Migraine characteristics include pain that is typically on the side of the head; pain that has a pulsating or throbbing quality; moderate to intense pain affecting daily activities; nausea or vomiting; sensitivity to light and sound; attacks that last four to 72 hours, sometimes longer; visual disturbances or aura; and exertion such as climbing stairs that makes the headache worse.

## Fighting Food-Related Headaches

Certain foods can trigger migraine headaches. Avoiding certain foods can help stop these triggers. One food to avoid is aged cheese. Aged cheese is high in tyramine, a substance that forms from the breakdown of protein in certain foods. Tyramine may increase blood flow to the brain which causes headaches in some people.

Other items to avoid are food additives. Certain food additives, including nitrites and some food colorings, are common headache triggers. Like tyramine, these additives may increase blood flow to the brain.

Also beware of “brain freeze” that comes with eating or drinking something that is too cold. For people prone to migraines, it can be the beginning of a migraine attack.


Some people have sensitivities to certain foods, but others develop headaches when they don’t eat. Remember anything that disrupts the body’s normal stability can cause a headache.

It is also a good idea to identify different triggers. Either set aside some time to experiment or keep a headache diary to spot connections between headaches and diet.



## How Can Migraines Be Treated?

There have been many advancements in the treatment of migraine headaches. Treatment options include medication, physical medicine, and counseling. A healthy lifestyle also enhances migraine management.

For more information about headache causes and treatments or National Headache Awareness Week, visit the National Headache Foundation’s website at [www.headaches.org](http://www.headaches.org). 

Source: The National Headache Foundation

## Chicken Cacciatore For Good Mental Health



Stress and/or underlying depression are migraine trigger factors. Here’s a recipe to help you beat the blues.

### Ingredients:

- 4-6 skinned chicken breasts
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 clove garlic, pressed
- 1 tsp basil
- 1/2 tsp oregano
- 3 large tomatoes, chopped
- 1/2 tsp wine vinegar

*Instructions:* Season breasts with pepper (and a little sea salt if desired) and brown on each side. Saute onion and garlic in olive oil for 4-5 minutes in a skillet. Add pepper, tomatoes, oregano and wine and bring to a boil. Cook about 10 minutes until sauce thickens. Add in chicken; cook another 10-15 minutes until it is done.

Serve over pasta (approximately 1/2 pound before cooking) or rice (approximately 1-1/2 cups before cooking).