



Wellness Center

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MIGRAINES

Migraines are primary brain disorders resulting from altered modulation of normal sensory stimuli and trigeminal nerve dysfunction. Migraines are strongly linked with sleep disorders, but can also be caused from lack of food, melatonin disturbances, and exposure to light, anxiety, stress, fatigue, and hormonal irregularities (especially estrogen shifts in women). Improved sleep, moderation of caffeine intake, regular exercise, and identification of triggers is essential for prevention. Relaxation, massage therapy, and biofeedback may also help to limit discomfort. There is some research to suggest that a well-balanced diet may aid in improving sleep, stress, mood, anxiety and thus aid in migraine prevention. More research is required for definitive answers.

Nutrition Tips

- Eat a well-balanced diet, with adequate meal spacing to prevent fasting or skipping of meals. Eat every 3-5 hours. Do not skip meals. Skipping meals can trigger migraines.
- Aim to eat fruits and vegetables daily. Try new fruits and vegetables often to ensure a wide variety of nutrients. Strive for more whole grains like whole grain breads, whole grain pastas, lentils, beans, quinoa, farro, barley, and oats.
- Limit sodium (salt) to <2,300mg per day.
- Drink ample amounts of fluid; aim for at least 64oz per day of water.
- Riboflavin (vitamin B2) supplements might be useful for migraine prevention. A few small clinical trials found 400mg of vitamin B2 per day (in adults) prevented migraine onset. Food sources of vitamin B2 include eggs, pork, salmon, soybeans, and button mushrooms.
- Magnesium supplements may also be useful in migraine prevention. A recommended amount of 400mg of magnesium citrate or consuming more magnesium rich foods may aid in migraine prevention. Foods that contain high amounts of magnesium include pumpkin seeds, dry roasted almonds, spinach, and dry roasted cashews.
- Engage in regular exercise. Strive for 150-300 minutes per week of moderate-intensity or 75-150 minutes per week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, and 2+ days per week of muscle-strengthening exercises.
- Get adequate sleep of 7-9 hours every night.
- Reduce use of foods that cause migraines. Try to track food intake and migraines consistently for at least 1 month to better identify which foods may be triggers.
 - A food log should include time of meal/snack, food consumed, and symptoms. Consistency is key!
- Food that may be triggers for various types of migraines:
 - Alcohol (champagne, red wine, beer, sherry, vermouth)
 - Caffeine (coffee, tea, cola)
 - Cheese (cheddar, brie, bleu, other aged cheeses)
 - Chocolate
 - Fermented foods (sauerkraut)
 - Processed meats (hot dogs, bacon, ham, jerky, corned beef, salami)
 - Vegetables (onions, pea pods, lima beans)
 - Very cold foods like ice cream

If symptoms worsen, please return to the Wellness Center for evaluation. To book an appointment call Dial-A-Nurse at (773) 508-8883 or go online to <https://www.luc.edu/wellness/>.