

# Options to prevent frequent migraines (eg. 3+ per month)

Time - 40% go away, 40% get better

but 20% get worse within 10 years

## Lifestyle and alternative therapies

- keep a migraine diary.
- regular bed and wake times,
- regular exercise and light meals.
- nuts and seeds (contain magnesium), whole grains and spinach. Fibre for breakfast.
- butterbur (supplements or fresh) 75mg x2 a day works in 50% (placebo works in 25%)
- acupuncture 10% better than placebo (headache frequency improves in 60%)
- riboflavin 25- 400mg daily. Said to help 1 in 2
- coenzyme Q10 100mg x3 a day. Helps 1 in 3.

avoid triggers eg certain alcoholic drinks, chocolate, cheese, cured meats and caffeine.

- might cause side effects. Avoid in pregnancy and with certain medications.
- side effects are rare  
10 sessions in 5-8 weeks
- urine may turn orange or red, diarrhoea
- might cause mild side effects

Medications - try for 2 months before deciding on benefit, stop if unacceptable side effects.

Pregnancy & Lactation: Migraines improve a lot in pregnancy. Nothing is truly safe in pregnancy or lactation. But if necessary, propranolol or low dose amitriptyline probably the safest.

## Beta blockers

e.g. propranolol 20mg twice a day helps 1 in 4 (45% improve compared with 20% placebo) helpful if BP high or anxiety/palpitations

7% stop with side effects: Insomnia, cold hands and feet, reduced exercise tolerance. NOT suitable in asthma

Topiramate 50-100mg per day helps 1 in 4 weight loss (if overweight)

NOT safe in pregnancy  
10% have side effects including loss of appetite and weight loss (so not for underweight), tingling, memory problems, taste disturbance  
dry mouth, drowsy in the morning if dose too high. Blurred vision. Dangerous in overdose.

Amitriptyline and Nortriptyline 10mg at night helps 1 in 4 (consider even lower dose) good for insomnia and pain

weight gain (increased appetite), drowsiness dry mouth, nausea. Not commonly used for adults

Pizotifen 0.5-1.5mg at night may help most in basilar migraine (vertigo) used more for children than adults helps 1 in 3

Candesartan 4-16mg daily helps 1 in 4 lowers blood pressure

blood tests (U+E) after each dose change and annually

Sodium valproate helps 1 in 3 rarely used

Dangerous in pregnancy. 15% have significant side effects: Dizziness, vertigo, tremor, nausea

Magnesium citrate 600mg daily helps 1 in 4 a good choice if also has constipation

Diarrhoea is very common. Try a much smaller dose