

# Is It Aura Or Something Else?

**Migraine is a common neurologic disease—affecting 20% of women and almost 8% of men.** Migraine with aura occurs in about one-third of those with migraine. Aura describes visual symptoms such as light sensitivity, blurred vision, sparkles and flickering. Because the symptoms are similar to those of other conditions—including stroke, amaurosis fugax and occipital epilepsy—it can be difficult to differentiate aura from other conditions. The following charts outline the difference between aura and other conditions and can help you figure out if your patient is experiencing aura or something else.



## Aura vs. Stroke

Aura	Stroke
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gradual onset (over five minutes)</li> <li>• Symptoms increase over time</li> <li>• Symptoms also include “positive” phenomena like seeing sparkles, zig-zag lines etc.</li> <li>• Aura symptoms usually let up within the hour</li> <li>• Headache may or may not occur</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symptoms appear almost instantaneously</li> <li>• Maximal symptoms on onset</li> <li>• Most frequently include “negative” phenomena, for example, the LOSS of vision, numbness or weakness</li> <li>• Strokes are usually continuous</li> <li>• Headache may or may not occur</li> </ul>

## Aura vs. Amaurosis Fugax (Transient Monocular Blindness)

Aura	Amaurosis Fugax
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual symptoms in both eyes</li> <li>• Symptoms increase over time</li> <li>• Symptoms also include “positive” phenomena like seeing sparkles, zig-zag lines etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual symptoms in one eye</li> <li>• Blindness is usually sudden</li> <li>• No positive phenomena, only darkness</li> </ul>

## Aura vs. Occipital Epilepsy

Aura	Occipital Epilepsy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lasts five minutes to an hour</li> <li>• Consciousness is unaffected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typically lasts seconds to minutes</li> <li>• Consciousness may be affected</li> </ul>

For more information on migraine and other headache disorders, visit [AHS' resources hub](#). If you are interested in women's health and migraine management, be sure to sign up for our brand new presentation on [A Woman's Migraine Journey](#).

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