

Lifestyle Recommendations for Migraine Patients

Changing routines to better manage migraine

Migraine can be a challenging condition to treat, but everyday actions can make a difference in the severity, frequency, and duration of migraine attacks. By establishing routines, patients can alter their lifestyles to improve the management of their migraine. You can help by guiding your patients and making lifestyle recommendations that align with their treatment goals.

It's important to explain to your patients how the recommended changes will help manage their migraine. When a patient understands the reason behind the lifestyle modifications, they are more likely to adhere to the changes. Be sure to include information about how consistency and patience are necessary for improving migraine.

Common Lifestyle Recommendations

Lifestyle changes that help with migraine run the gamut from getting regular sleep to incorporating relaxation techniques. Here are some common lifestyle recommendations you can offer your patients.

Medication Management

- Encourage reduction and even avoidance of over-the-counter headache medications if used more than 10 days per month.
- Consider preventive treatment if a patient is unable to manage with an acute medication in limited amounts or without bothersome side effects.

Sleep

- Recommend the patient reduces their exposure to artificial light, televisions, computers, tablets, and cell phones before bed to reduce the increase in stimulation to the sensitive occipital cortex as well as reducing the suppressive effect light has on sleep signaling and circuitry.
- Encourage the patient to relax before bed with a bath, self-massage, reading, light conversation, or journaling.

Meal Pattern

- Recommend the patient establishes a consistent eating pattern to avoid skipped meals or eating on an unpredictable schedule. Inconsistent eating patterns lead to cravings, unpredictable adrenal output, and a higher risk of pain, weight, and mood imbalances.
- Encourage the patient to eat three set meals per day with healthy snacks in between. Diet should be enriched with whole foods, and water should be the primary means of hydration.

Relaxation

- Recommend the patient incorporate stress-reduction techniques into their daily routine, as stress is one of the most commonly cited triggers for migraine.
- Encourage the patient to go for a walk, meditate, or perform stretches every day.