

What Is Migraine

How to recognize and diagnose this neurological disease

Migraine is an episodic disorder, most commonly consisting of severe headache, usually with photophobia (light sensitivity), phonophobia (sound sensitivity) and/or nausea (at times vomiting). It is one of the most frequent chief complaints presented to healthcare providers including neurologists and emergency medicine.

Migraine typically affects more women than men, often peaking during two phases of life: puberty and perimenopause. Migraine can lead to significant amounts of mental, physical, financial, medical, societal and personal burden when not properly addressed.

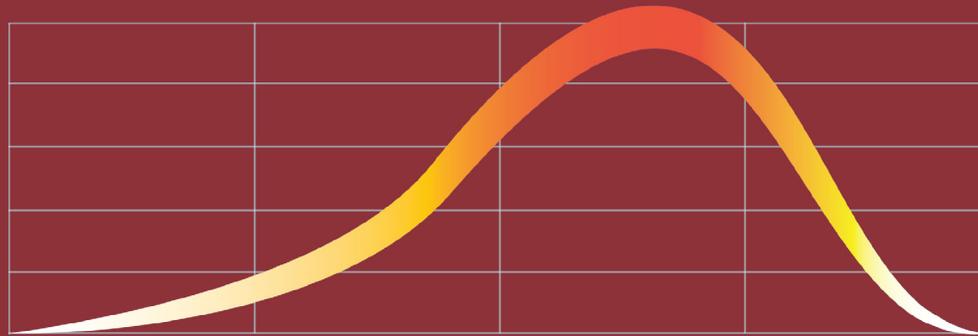


Migraine Clinical Features

Migraine as defined by the International Classification of Headache Disorders, third edition (ICHD-3), should include the following:

- At least five or more attacks in lifetime
- Headache attack lasting 4-72 hrs
- At least one of the following features
 - Nausea and/or vomiting
 - Photophobia
- At least two out of four features
 - Unilateral location
 - Pulsating/throbbing quality
 - Moderate-severe intensity
 - Aggravation by/causing avoidance of routine physical activity

TIMELINE OF A MIGRAINE ATTACK



PRODROME

FEW HOURS TO DAYS

IRRITABILITY
DEPRESSION
YAWNING
INCREASED NEED TO URINATE
FOOD CRAVINGS
SENSITIVITY TO LIGHT/SOUND
PROBLEMS IN CONCENTRATING
FATIGUE AND MUSCLE STIFFNESS
DIFFICULTY IN SPEAKING AND READING
NAUSEA
DIFFICULTY IN SLEEPING

AURA

5-60 MIN

VISUAL DISTURBANCES
VISION DISTURBANCE
NUMBNESS AND TINGLING ON PART OF THE BODY

HEADACHE

4-72 HRS

THROBBING
DRILLING
ICEPICK IN THE HEAD
BURNING
NAUSEA
VOMITING
GIDDINESS
INSOMNIA
NASAL CONGESTION
ANXIETY
DEPRESSED MOOD
SENSITIVITY TO LIGHT, SMELL, SOUND
NECK PAIN AND STIFFNESS

POSTDROME

24-48 HRS

INABILITY TO CONCENTRATE
FATIGUE
DEPRESSED MOOD
EUPHORIC MOOD
LACK OF COMPREHENSION

Migraine Attack Phases

- 1. Prodrome:** Commonly 24-48 hours prior to headache. Can include yawning, mood changes, food cravings, GI symptoms, increased sensitivities and/or neck stiffness
- 2. Aura:** See list of migraine variants below for descriptions
- 3. Headache:** See typical clinical features listed above; also keep in mind headache location often shifts around the cranium
- 4. Postdrome:** Often feeling drained/exhausted, although at times mild elation or euphoria

How to Identify Migraine

This is a quick screening tool you can use to identify migraine. Patients should present with at least two out of these three features.

- Disability (limits routine daily activity, work/school, social activity)
- Nausea
- Photophobia

Note: Sensitivity of 0.81 (95% CI, 0.77 to 0.85), specificity of 0.75 (95% CI, 0.64 to 0.84) in a primary care setting.