

A Guide to Nutraceuticals for Migraine

Nutraceuticals are food-derived products, like vitamin and mineral supplements, that may potentially have therapeutic benefit. There are several of these options that may have a positive impact when it comes to migraine treatment.



Nutraceuticals and Migraine Treatment

Studies have shown that 80% of people with headache disorders have used some form of alternative medicine, including nutraceuticals, for headache treatment.

| Common Nutraceuticals for Migraine | |
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| Magnesium | Mineral used to prevent migraine attacks |
| Riboflavin | Mineral used to prevent migraine attacks |
| Co-Enzyme Q10 (CoQ10) | Regular doses of this antioxidant have been shown to reduce frequency and intensity of migraine |

Other alternatives used for migraine treatment include feverfew, butterbur, tree bark, lavender, peppermint, and ginkgo biloba. However, there is less evidence to support their efficacy.

Three Questions about Nutraceuticals

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Are nutraceuticals safe?

'Natural' does not necessarily mean safe, so make sure to use medications with some sort of scientific backing. Studies have shown that some nutraceuticals are effective and safe for people with migraine, others carry additional risk. Your doctor is the best resource to help you understand if a specific supplement is right for you.

What are the risks of taking nutraceuticals?

Most of the risks of common nutraceuticals are gastrointestinal, and they can lead to upset stomachs or irregular bowel movements. Nutraceuticals should be treated as medications that could have potentially harmful side effects, not vitamins, so make sure to consult your doctor about potential side effects before modifying your treatment plan.

How are nutraceuticals regulated?

Nutraceuticals in the United States are considered food, not medicine, so they don't fall under the same regulations. While companies have a responsibility to maintain responsible, safe, and ethical business practices, they don't really have to conduct research proving that their product is safe or effective. Keep that in mind before integrating these into your treatment regime.



Talking to Your Doctor About Nutraceuticals

If you're interested in trying nutraceuticals for migraine, it's important to consult with your doctor. Make the most of your appointment by doing your research, setting the stage for a productive dialogue and asking questions.

Start by asking yourself what your goals for treatment are. Do you want to be migraine-free, or do you want to reduce the severity of your attacks?

Read about nutraceuticals you're interested in and come up with specific questions you can ask your doctor. Think about how they fit into your lifestyle, medical history and existing treatment plan.

Don't be afraid to mention alternative treatments to maintain an honest dialogue with your physician. They're there to advise you and guide you in your decision-making.

Before Going to the Doctor, Know...

- 1. Know Your Headache.** What does your headache feel like? Where is the pain? When do you usually get headaches? Are there any suspected triggers? How long do your headaches last?
- 2. Know Your Medical History.** Bring a list of medical conditions, allergies, past surgeries (especially brain, neck, or back) and any medications you're taking.
- 3. Know Your Treatment History.** Keep track of any medications for headache you've taken in the past, your doses, how long you've taken them for and why you stopped taking the medication. Be sure to mention any side-effects.
- 4. Know Your Social History.** Be prepared to talk about where you live, what you do, whether you smoke, drink alcohol, and other lifestyle factors that may influence your headache and affect your treatment plan.

Tip: Keep a headache diary to track your headache and treatments all in one place. A diary is a simple tool that can help both you and your headache doctor ease the pain and find the right treatment.

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FOUNDATION

The mission of the American Migraine Foundation is to mobilize a community for patient support and advocacy, as well as drive and support impactful research that translates into advances for patients with migraine and other disabling diseases that cause severe head pain. Visit americanmigrainefoundation.org for more resources for people living with migraine and their supporters.

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