

Migraines

Migraineurs (those that suffer from migraines) tend to have a more delicate balance than most. When they are out of balance, they are more likely to be close to "threshold" for a migraine. Therefore it is important that you strive for rhythm in your waking/sleeping, eating, exercising, etc.

Lifestyle recommendations:

- Try to go to bed/wake/exercise/sleep at approximately the same time everyday. This will support your circadian rhythms, digestive health, mood, energy and immunity as well as raise your threshold for a migraine.
- Avoid common migraine triggers: caffeine, chocolate, wine - especially red wine, hard cheeses - parmesan, blue cheeses, gluten containing grains (*see more extensive list below).
- Include lots of anti-inflammatory herbs: turmeric (curry), ginger, cayenne, garlic. Can make anti-inflammatory oil by adding ground or powdered turmeric to coconut oil. Can use this for sauteing vegetables, etc.
- Daily exercise: this is beneficial on multiple fronts. It optimizes blood flow to the brain, is anti-inflammatory in nature, reduces stress, and increases endorphins; all of which raise your threshold for a migraine.
- Good posture and appropriate body work: Neck and upper back tension will lower your migraine threshold. Attend to good ergonomics at your workstation and get appropriate body work - PT, massage, acupuncture, Bowen therapy, and/or craniosacral treatment.
- Manage stress: Start with an optimum diet, exercise, sleep and posture! Spend time in nature, pursue creativity, and consider a regular meditation practice.
- See book: *Heal Your Headaches* by David Buccholz, MD - great book by a Johns Hopkins neurologist.

Supplements: *Can purchase most of these through Fullscript/Wellevate.*

- Butterbur Extra: (Vitanica): 3 caps in divided doses for 2-3 months, then take the week of menses.

Migraine Triggers Foods to Avoid

Listed in order of migraine threat:

Avoid Caffeine- coffee (even decaffeinated is problematic), tea, sodas, all caffeine.

Avoid Chocolate- Chocolate.

Avoid MSG*- MSG: monosodium glutamate- Check ingredients: MSG can be present in many ingredients not explicitly labeled “MSG”.

Avoid Processed meats and fish- nitrates and nitrites and/or MSG*: most deli meats, ham, hotdogs, bacon, pate, jerky- smoked, aged, cured, marinated, pickled, and tenderized meats- most canned meats (tuna listed on left is fine, though), caviar- liver, wild game (due to tyramine)- bottled gravy.

Avoid Some Dairy- aged cheese: sour cream, buttermilk, yogurt.

Avoid Nuts- All nuts and peanuts.

Avoid Alcohol and Most Vinegar- all vinegars except white distilled- beer, wine, liquor.

Avoid Bottled Sauces and Salad Dressings- premade sauces and salad dressings (typically contain MSG and other non-allowed ingredients)- fermented soy products (soy sauce, teriyaki sauce).

Avoid Some fruits- raisins, dates, dried fruit with sulfites- citrus (oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit) and pineapple- bananas, red plums- raspberries, figs - avocado, papayas, passion fruit.

Avoid Some Vegetables- onions - snow peas, sugar snap peas- some beans: fava beans, lentils, lima beans, navy beans, and broad Italian beans - might want to avoid soy; some soy products may be fine (soybean oil)- some people have problems with tomatoes, but don't avoid unless you need to. (try cooked vegetables if raw is intolerable)- some people have problems with peas and mushrooms (high amounts of naturally free glutamate), but don't avoid them unless you need to.

Avoid Fresh Yeast-Risen Products- freshly-risen yeast (fresh breads and bagels).

Avoid Some Artificial Sweeteners- aspartame (NutraSweet), saccharin (Sweet 'n Low).

Avoid Anything else you know is a trigger. You know your body better than anyone else. If you are certain something is a trigger for you, avoid it.