

General Migraine Advice for Adults

What lifestyle choices can I make to help prevent migraines?

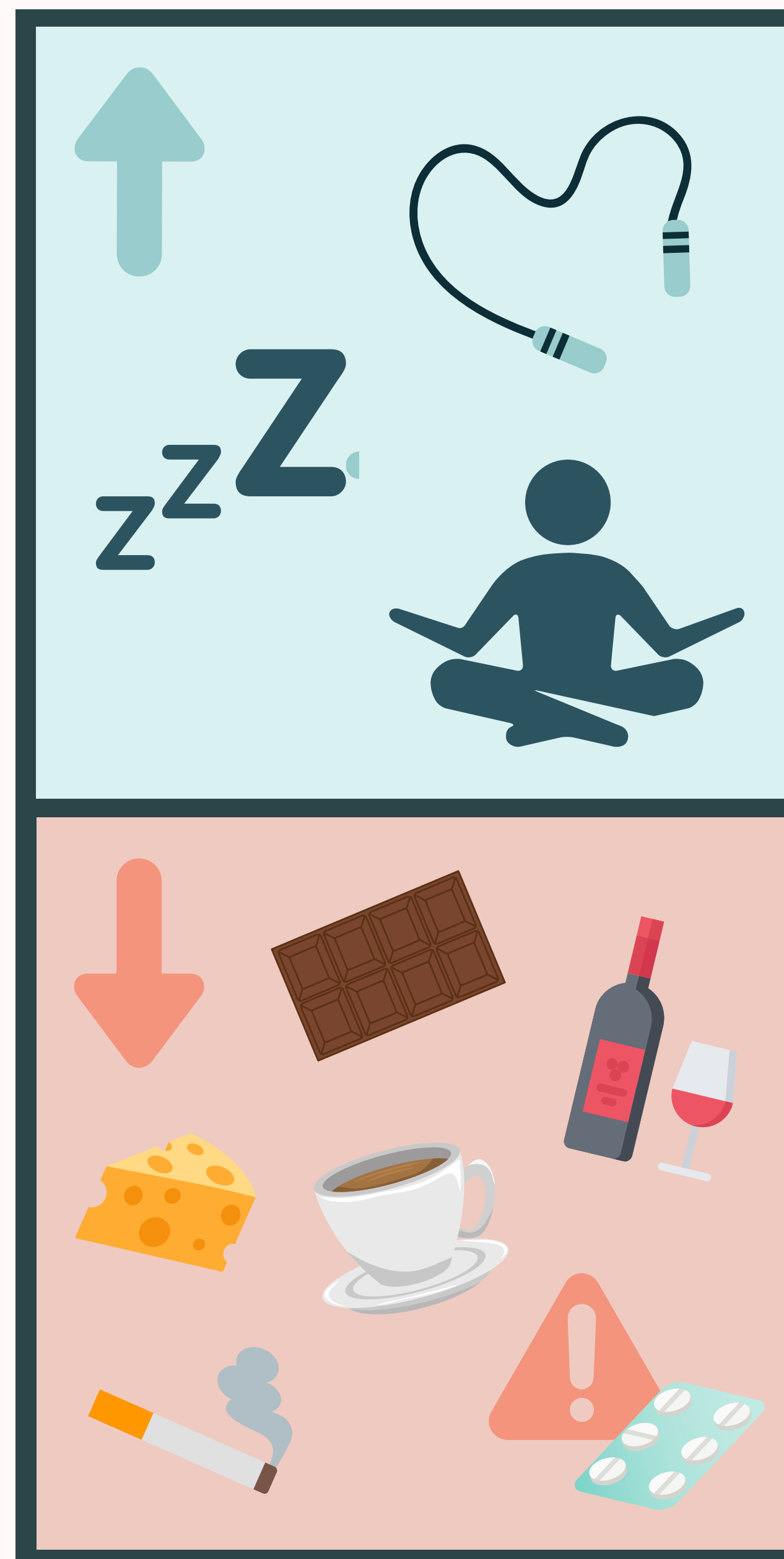
Sleep hygiene refers to healthy sleep habits. It's not only about getting enough sleep, but having a consistent bed time and wake-up time and many other factors.

Fitness helps prevent migraines! Exercise a minimum of 30 minutes a day (as simple as taking a walk). There is a correlation between a person's % of body fat and migraines. The person's body composition is more important than the number on the scale. Once a migraine has already started, only low intensity exercise is recommended (moderate to high intensity exercise will likely make it worse).

Triggers in for migraines that can often be avoided: caffeine, alcohol, chocolate, cheese, smoking, skipping meals. For people who menstruate, different phases of the menstrual cycle may also be a trigger for migraines.

Oral contraceptives (birth control pill) which make migraines worse may increase the risk of stroke and you should talk to your doctor about a possible alternative. If migraine aura increases on the birth control pill, it should likely be discontinued.

Relaxing may help to prevent migraines. Find things that help you to relax such as meditation, mindfulness, aromatherapy, reading a book, pursuing a new hobby, etc.



Who benefits from migraine prophylaxis (migraine prevention)?

Anybody who gets a true migraine at least **once a week** (not anybody who gets a headache at least once a week). Individuals who have migraines that do not respond to medications used to stop migraines should also consider prophylaxis. Migraines usually produce symptoms that are more intense and debilitating than headaches. There are different ways to prevent migraines and this is mainly dealt with by Neurology.



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What natural supplements are available for migraine prophylaxis?

Magnesium. Patients start at 250 mg/day and increase gradually to 500 mg/day. Magnesium is typically taken at bedtime as it helps some people to sleep and for some people it helps with their muscle pain. For others, it doesn't work at all. It can cause diarrhea as a side effect, which is the reason to increase it progressively. Other supplements can be considered (riboflavin, co-enzyme Q10, and melatonin).

What medications are available to help with migraine prophylaxis (prevention)?

Beta-blockers and **angiotensin receptor blockers (e.g., Candesartan)** are typically used to treat high blood pressure, but are also used to prevent migraines. In a population of individuals with aneurysms, these medications have the advantage that they have a protective effect against progressive aortic dilation. Feeling tired is a common side effect of beta-blockers but not usually angiotensin receptor blockers. Other medications can be considered.

What medications are available for a migraine once it is already there?

Soluble aspirin (e.g., Alka-Seltzer) may be taken in combination with two extra strength acetaminophens (Tylenol):

These medications can be used to treat migraines, if the patient doesn't have a contraindication to aspirin. For example, some people shouldn't take aspirin because of they have asthma or a stomach ulcer. Always consult your doctor before starting a new medication. Additionally, prescription medications called triptans may help:

In adults who do not have a diagnosis of an aneurysm:

There is a class of medications called triptans which are commonly used to treat severe migraines. These must be prescribed by a doctor since not everyone can take triptans.

In adults with an aneurysm or condition predisposing to aneurysms:

These conditions include Marfan, Loeys-Dietz syndrome, and vascular EDS. Triptans may increase the odds of dissection. It is best for these individuals to avoid triptans.