



Headache Wellness Center

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Migraine Headache

Migraine headache affects over 28 million people in the United States. It occurs in approximately 18% of women and 6% of men.

It is one of most commonly misdiagnosed disorders, with up to half of all migraine patients being told they suffer from “sinus” headaches, tension-type headaches, “sick” headaches, or any number of other conditions. Those patients who are ultimately diagnosed with migraine headaches have usually suffered many years before their diagnosis is made. Most of these individuals have used a variety of products to treat their headaches, including antibiotics, sinus and allergy medications, over-the-counter medicines, and narcotics.

Migraine headache is characterized by recurrent severe headaches. Although most migraine sufferers will experience at some time a one-sided throbbing headache associated with nausea/vomiting and sensitivity to sounds, lights, and movements, all of these features are not required to be present to make a diagnosis of migraine. Vomiting occurs in less than one-third of individuals. Neck pain is present in approximately 75% of migraineurs. Facial pain, nasal congestion, and facial pressure are very common.

Our understanding of migraine continues to develop each year. We initially believed that migraine was due to constriction and dilatation of blood vessels of the brain. Now we recognize that migraine is much more complicated, representing a process of changes involving neurotransmitters, inflammatory proteins, the trigeminal nerve, the brain cortex and brainstem, as well as the connections in-between.

As our knowledge progresses our ability to treat this condition improves. Although there is currently no cure for migraine, many options exist for successful management.