The Importance of Recognizing Migraine Warning Signs

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Migraine Warning Signs

The truth is that if you've had migraine headaches for a long time, you are well aware of small and large warning signs that indicate you should brace yourself for another migraine. If you haven't, however, it's important to know what your migraine warning signs are.

Identifying the Warning Signs

Identifying the warning signs is also helpful to figure out the triggers, and for this reason a daily diary should be used by all migraine sufferers. Usually two or more well-known triggers (stress, certain foods or medications, smells, menses in women) are present. By connecting the triggers with the onset of migraines, an individual will be more likely able to avoid those triggers. If certain foods or drugs are the culprits, they should be avoided and replaced with other ones. If the periods are linked with a migraine attack, a treatment for hormonal balance may be recommended. If the stress and lack of sleep correlate with symptoms, biofeedback, meditation and other mind-body techniques offer effective anti-stress results.

Warning signs will tell you a migraine attack is about to come. If their pattern or intensity change, or new symptoms develop you should also see a doctor to rule out other conditions, since chronic migraines are associated with an increased risk of strokes or cardiovascular problems; for example, if the headache is way more intense than usual, if there are vision problems, or weakness, speech problems and dizziness present, then you should go to the hospital as soon as possible to rule out a stroke.

Bottom line: keep track and be aware of the warning signs that precede a migraine. This way it will be easier to treat the migraine and prevent future episodes. It will also help you to recognize (and thus eliminate) the triggers and differentiate the migraine from other health conditions.

Prodrome Symptoms

Doctors and scientists call symptoms that occur before a migraine sets in the prodrome symptoms. Up to 24 hours before a migraine, you may feel any of these symptoms:

- depression
- excessive yawning
- stiff neck
- euphoria
- stuffy nose or sinus congestion
- more urination than usual
- inability to concentrate
- uncontrollable food cravings
- diarrhea

- lack of sleep the night before the migraine
- constipation
- fatigue that is unexplainable

You can see from these symptoms that they occur in many different systems of the body. They are affecting the brain, physical body and spine, respiratory tract, kidney, and digestive system.

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Other Symptoms

Other symptoms may start to show up at the beginning of the headaches. Some of these include seeing spots in front of the eyes that may shimmer, lines of light, light flashes, or a loss of vision. There may also be difficulty speaking, confusion and nerve signs such as tingling in any part of the body or even numbness.

The big question is what can you do to stop the migraine headache from occurring – and if you can stop the symptom, can you stop an impending headache?

Preventing Migraine Headaches

Each case is different so you'll have to experiment on your own. Here are some out-of-the-box thinking ideas on how to alleviate symptoms naturally before the big migraine hits:

- **Depression and euphoria** – Get your lithium levels checked on a hair analysis. Low lithium levels are exceptionally common in those who live in geographical areas where lithium is not found naturally in the soil and water, such as California. The element lithium is an element that stabilizes moods.
- **Excessive yawning and a stiff neck may go together.** If you have trigger points in your upper back and neck, you are most likely to have decreased oxygen flow to the head and neck, which can contribute to the prodrome symptoms of migraine as well as the migraines themselves. The solution could be to have a massage therapist work out these trigger points in four to five massage sessions.
- **Uncontrollable food cravings and inexplainable fatigue** – These symptoms are usually mineral deficiencies. A hair analysis can detect what is going on in your body with your mineral levels.
- **Lack of sleep** – Are you using your grounding mat? By sleeping on your grounding mat, you can assure a good night of rest. The best place to get a mat is at the Earthing Institute.
- **Diarrhea and constipation** - One herb called slippery elm is great for both diarrhea and constipation. The herb normalizes the colon functions no matter what is wrong. Mix a tablespoon of the powdered herb in with applesauce and eat freely.

Drug Therapy

Another way to prevent a migraine attack involves drug therapy.

Drug therapy can also be classified in two main groups: abortive medications (i.e. non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, ergots or triptans) are specifically used when the warning signs are experienced and during the migraine attacks and preventive (prophylactic) drugs (i.e. beta blockers, tricyclic antidepressants, anti-seizure) are used on a regular basis to prevent future attacks. Usually both abortive and prophylactic drugs are used if the migraines occur often, last a long time, and are intense.

Conclusion

It is important to be aware and recognize the warning signs because taking abortive medications or making healthy lifestyle changes can prevent the migraine attack or improve the symptoms promptly.