What Is a Migraine With Aura?

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

Understanding Causes, Symptoms and Treatment of Migraine With Aura

Have you ever experienced flashes of light, blurred vision, or other visual changes before a migraine? It’s called an aura, and it affects upwards of 30 percent of migraine sufferers.

Approximately a half-hour before migraine headache symptoms begin, you may experience flashes or flickering light, zigzag lines, blurred vision, seeing dark areas, among other visual effects. This aura could end after just a few minutes, but sometimes lasts throughout the headache into migraine postdrome.

This sensation doesn’t always occur with each headache — in fact, it’s likely migraine with aura will account for less than a quarter of your migraines.

The majority of people who experience migraine with aura will experience a visual aura, but some will have a sensory aura. This involves changes in your other senses, like tingling, numbness, pins and needles, and other abnormal sensations.

Serotonin and dopamine are thought to play a role in causing aura, but it is not known for sure. Other factors that may contribute to aura are genetics, being overweight, certain substances, and environmental factors.



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25–30%
of migraine sufferers
EXPERIENCE
MIGRAINE
WITH AURA[i.]

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AURAS
are present in
LESS THAN
20% OF ALL
MIGRAINES[iv.]

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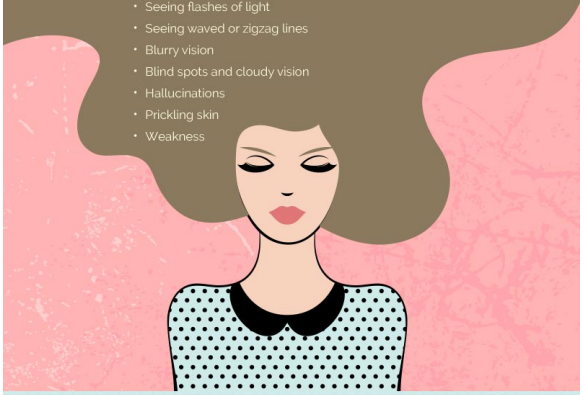
SYMPTOMS

Symptoms usually occur 30 minutes before the headache begins, and can last 5-20 minutes or persist through the migraine.[ii., iii.]

Symptoms include:

- Seeing flashes of light
- Seeing waved or zigzag lines
- Blurry vision
- Blind spots and cloudy vision
- Hallucinations
- Prickling skin
- Weakness



WHAT CAUSES A MIGRAINE WITH AURA?[v.]

- Being overweight and your genetics may play a role.
- Environmental and behavioral triggers may prompt these migraines as well.
- Even serotonin and dopamine regulation may play a part.



WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

Treatment will focus on relieving symptoms and preventing further migraines with:

- Over-the-counter pain medications
- Prescription pain medications
- Beta-blockers
- Antidepressants
- Transcranial magnetic stimulator (TMS)

If you think you are experiencing migraine with aura, contact your doctor to ensure it's not being caused by other factors, and find the relief you need.

Resources:

i. https://migraine.com/migraine-symptoms/aura/
ii. http://www.webmd.com/migraines-headaches/what-is-a-migraine-with-aura
iii. https://migraine.com/migraine-types/migraine-with-aura/
iv, v, vi http://www.webmd.com/migraines-headaches/what-is-a-migraine-with-aura

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