

A DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR THE WORKPLACE

EXCEDRIN[®]

WHEN MIGRAINES ARE AT WORK, EVERYTHING ELSE STOPS.

Migraines impact the workplace more than many other illnesses, including heart disease, diabetes and arthritis.¹ In fact, in the U.S. over 38 million people suffer from migraines, costing American employers more than \$13 billion each year as a result of 113 million work days lost to the disease.²

In a recent national survey by Excedrin[®], **70%** of migraine sufferers reported that working during a migraine impacted their performance on the job. Additionally, **nearly 2 out of 3** sufferers shared that they have downplayed the severity of their migraine attacks and “powered through.” In addition to working through migraines, sufferers live their workdays in isolation. That’s because nearly **7 out of 10** (68%) migraine sufferers feel that their coworkers don’t truly understand what they go through, having never experienced a migraine themselves.

As the head pain expert, Excedrin[®] is on a mission to create empathy for migraine sufferers at home and at work. But talking about migraines isn’t easy. It’s difficult to explain what a migraine attack feels like to coworkers who may have little to no experience dealing with them. With the goal of empowering migraine sufferers everywhere to openly discuss and educate coworkers about migraines, Excedrin[®] created this guide in partnership with Dr. Elizabeth Seng, clinical psychologist and head pain expert, whose tips are featured throughout.

BUT FIRST...WHAT IS A MIGRAINE?³



OCCURS WITH OR
WITHOUT AURA



PAIN ON ONE SIDE
OF THE HEAD



SENSITIVITY
TO LIGHT

BUT FIRST...WHAT IS A MIGRAINE?³

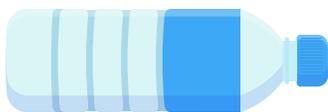
- A chronic neurological disease characterized by recurring, throbbing pain that usually affects one side of the head, but may affect both sides
- The pain, ranging from moderate to severe, can be pounding, excruciating and debilitating
- It's accompanied by nausea and sometimes vomiting, and/or sensitivity to light (photophobia) and sound (phonophobia)
- When untreated, a single migraine attack can last from 4 to 72 hours
- The pain is often worsened by physical activity, such as climbing stairs, mild exercise, bending over, or sudden changes in position



WHAT CAUSES A MIGRAINE?

A migraine can strike anywhere and anytime—at work, at home, or even on your much-anticipated vacation. Certain changes in your body and environment (“migraine triggers”) can increase your chances of a migraine attack, including:

- Increases or decreases in stress
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Inconsistent meal and hydration times
- Caffeine and caffeine withdrawal
- Hormonal changes
- Harsh lighting, loud sounds and strong smells, like perfumes
- Certain foods, such as aged cheeses, pickled products, dried, aged or smoked meats, and any fermented soy products

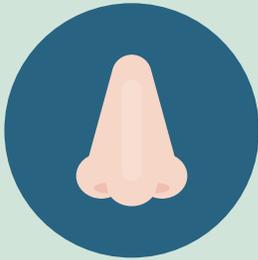


HOW DO YOU MANAGE A MIGRAINE?⁵

It's important to be prepared since a migraine may be inevitable, especially at work, where you spend the majority of your time. Planning for a migraine attack allows you the opportunity to find relief, get back to work faster and alleviate anxiety about things not getting done. Having migraine medications like Excedrin[®] nearby is important because treating at the first sign of a migraine can help you find relief faster.

Every migraine sufferer's triggers are different, and managing them in the workplace is an ongoing exercise—one that might require a coworker's help. Here are some ways you can manage a migraine at work, based on the trigger:

ENVIRONMENTAL TRIGGERS⁵



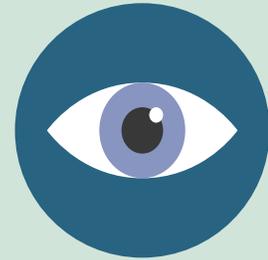
SMELL

Request a fragrance-free work policy or talk to your employer about asking coworkers to voluntarily refrain from wearing fragrances.



SOUND

Request to be relocated to a quieter location in the office.



LIGHT

Request an anti-glare filter for your computer monitor or wear anti-glare glasses. Avoid eye strain: Take breaks from looking at your computer screen every 20 minutes or so.

STRESS⁴

- Take 10 deep, slow breaths with your diaphragm
- Practice mindfulness and enjoy the moment when taking a short walk or having a snack
- Close your eyes and spend a few minutes imagining yourself in a pleasant place while breathing deeply
- Take breaks to stretch the muscles in your neck and shoulders



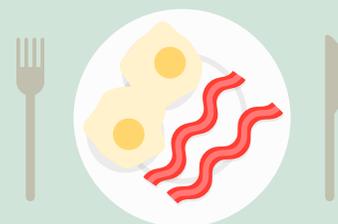
SLEEP⁴

- Keep your work hours as consistent as possible
- Avoid after-hours events, when possible, that may interfere with your sleep schedule
- On the weekends, keep your sleep schedule consistent with the weekdays



HUNGER AND DEHYDRATION⁴

- Start your workday off right with a filling breakfast
- Keep your meal and snack times consistent each day and avoid long periods of time when you don't eat anything
- Fill your water bottle and drink water consistently throughout the day to stay hydrated



HOW TO TALK TO YOUR COWORKERS ABOUT MIGRAINES

It's your choice whether to disclose your migraines to managers and coworkers or not. However, alerting and educating them about what's going on gives them the chance to understand your condition. Taking the time to talk with your employer and coworkers about your migraines also helps them understand what they can do to help you if a migraine strikes at work.

ATTACK THE CONVERSATION “HEAD-ON”

Explain what a migraine is:

- Describe your symptoms and triggers, and what may happen when a migraine hits
- Share resources so they can do additional research on their own:
 - » [Excedrin.com](https://www.excedrin.com)
 - » [MigraineResearchFoundation.org](https://www.migraineresearchfoundation.org)
 - » [Migraine.com](https://www.migraine.com)
 - » [AmericanMigraineFoundation.com](https://www.americanmigraine.com)

Share the facts:

- Migraines cost employers approximately \$13 billion annually²
 - » Everyone benefits from finding ways to work together to reduce the frequency of migraine attacks at work and minimize the impact of migraine attacks on productivity
- Migraines are the 6th most disabling condition in the world²



Communicate frankly:⁴

- At the first sign of a migraine, alert those around you and take the time you need to get the appropriate treatment or rest
- Consider asking for a flexible schedule or to work from home (if possible)—this will help you better control your environment and reduce the likelihood of a migraine attack



Put a reactive plan in place:⁴

- Explain what others can do to help if a migraine puts you on the sidelines
- You may need separate plans for managing environmental triggers, and managing a migraine in the moment



¹Mitchell, R. J., & Bates, P. (2011). Measuring Health-Related Productivity Loss. *Population Health Management*, 14(2), 93-98. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3128441/>

²Migraine Facts. Np. (2017). Migraine Research Foundation. <https://migraineresearchfoundation.org/about-migraine/migraine-facts/>

³What is a Migraine? Np. (2017). Migraine Research Foundation. <https://migraineresearchfoundation.org/about-migraine/what-is-migraine/>

⁴Seng, Elizabeth (June 2017). [Email and phone interviews]

⁵Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Migraine Headaches. N.p.(2013). Job Accommodation Network. <https://askjan.org/media/Migraine.html>