

# How to Support Someone With Migraine

## *A guide for your migraine support system*

What do you do when your friend or family member tells you they have migraine? This guide walks you through what migraine is and how you can support your loved one on their good and headache days.

### 3 Things to Know About Migraine

- 1. Migraine is a disabling disease.** More than 37 million people in the United States live with migraine, and it's the third most common disease in the world and the single most disabling among adults under the age of 49 years.
- 2. Migraine is not just a headache** and is often accompanied by symptoms such as dizziness, difficulty concentrating, processing information, nausea, insomnia, and sensitivity to light, sound, odors and touch. For more than 90% of those affected, migraine interferes with education, family, career and social activities.
- 3. There is no cure for migraine yet.** It can be managed through various treatment options that aim to reduce frequency and intensity. Migraine research is underfunded relative to its disease burden on the population.

### Join Their Migraine Support Team

#### Communicate

Everyone experiences migraine differently and may need different kinds of support. Here are some questions to help guide a conversation about migraine with your loved one:

- What is your migraine care routine?
- What medications, if any, do you take?
- What migraine triggers do you avoid?
- What brings you relief during a migraine attack?
- How can I help when you have a migraine attack?

#### Participate

Help your loved one set long-term goals for avoiding triggers and managing lifestyle factors that can affect their condition. Then, work together to stick to them. Here are some suggestions:

- Learn a new migraine-friendly recipe every month.
- Take a short walk every day as a form of exercise.
- Get seven to eight hours of sleep every night.
- Drink eight glasses of water a day.
- Discover new migraine-friendly hobbies together.
- Find a specialist to develop a management strategy.



Many migraine hygiene practices are recommended practices for all people trying to adopt a healthy lifestyle. You can pledge to incorporate these practices into your life to show solidarity with your loved one living with migraine.

# How Support Someone With Migraine

You are a crucial part of your loved one's migraine support team. There's a fine line between encouraging them and sounding patronizing or suggesting something they simply can't do given their pain level. Here are some things to avoid and alternatives that can help show your loved one that you're on their team.

Don't say it's just a headache.	You likely have the best intentions when you say that their migraine is just a headache and they can overcome it, but that's not true. Instead, validate their pain and be supportive. Think back to your conversations about what to do during a migraine attack, and be there for them however they need.
Don't blame them for their symptoms.	Tell them that they're strong and you admire their perseverance. You may not be able to empathize, but you know that living with migraine isn't easy and that they're doing their best.
Don't make them feel bad about missing out.	Your loved one has likely missed out on many events they would have loved to be at. Instead of telling them that people missed them or you wished they had been there, work with them to find a compromise so they can maintain their relationships with friends and family. For example, plan a quiet night in with friends instead of the regularly scheduled night out.
Don't feel helpless.	Many people who support someone living with migraine say they feel helpless because there's little they can do to alleviate the pain. Instead, help in other ways. Picking up groceries, cleaning the house and taking out the trash won't help the head pain, but it does give them one less thing to worry about.
Don't stop here.	Until more accessible treatment or a cure is found, your loved one and millions of others will continue battling this disabling disease. Support the migraine community as a whole by spreading the word about migraine's impact and becoming an advocate for your loved ones and their disease. Work to help them find a health care provider who specializes in the management of migraine.



Visit [americanmigrainefoundation.org](https://americanmigrainefoundation.org) for more resources for people living with migraine and their supporters. Our Resource Library is constantly updated with new, doctor-sourced content about migraine symptoms, treatment and best practices. Together, we are as relentless as migraine.

## American Migraine Foundation

19 Mantua Rd. Mount Royal, NJ 08061 | P: 856.423.0043 | E: [amf@talley.com](mailto:amf@talley.com)