

Managing migraine can be tough but there are tools available to help you.

The main thing you will be asked to do early in your migraine journey is keep a migraine diary. This helps to confirm the diagnosis. Some people find keeping a diary beneficial and keep doing it, others only do it when there's a change.

There are also many apps available that range from simple diaries to more comprehensive management tools. Sometimes people find it challenging to record all the information suggested in migraine diaries and apps. It can also be challenging for doctors to interpret all that data! Ask your doctor what information they want to make it easier for both of you.

A simple but quite effective method for recording migraine attacks is the traffic light system.

On a calendar, mark days as:

- Green days: totally clear, no pain or migraine symptoms
- Red days: really severe migraine attacks that severely limit activities
- Orange days: in between green and red days

In addition to the traffic lights, mark down any day that you take medication to help with the migraine attack. Also mark down each day of your period, for people who menstruate.

That's it. This provides the core info that doctors need to assess migraine severity and response to medications.

Diaries to identify triggers

One way to identify your triggers and gain an understanding of any patterns in your migraine attacks is to keep a migraine trigger diary.

This is usually a very detailed diary, including what time you got up, everything you ate, drank, and did in your day, what the weather was like, through to what time you went to sleep. Don't forget to include your menstruation and ovulation days if that applies to you. And if you have a migraine attack, all your symptoms and medications. You can do this just in a diary or notebook.

You will need to keep a trigger diary for a while to be able to identify your likely migraine triggers. However, diaries are not very good for figuring out food triggers because it is challenging to tell what foods are triggers and what foods you are craving as an early symptom that a migraine attack has started. If you suspect you have food triggers, then you may consider a consider seeing a dietician with an interest in migraine.

Keeping a diary long term can be detrimental to your mental health, as it requires you to continue focusing on your migraine and some people can find this stressful. If this happens, consider limiting your use of diaries to when there are some changes in your migraine patterns.

It may be helpful to keep your headache diary or a calendar next to your bed. At the end of each day before you go to sleep, you can record whether you had a headache/migraine or not and whether you took any pain medications. It should take less than 1 minute per day to record this information and can help you identify any patterns (such as whether you are taking too much pain medication).

Migraine apps

Migraine apps are an excellent way to monitor migraine attacks, share data with your doctor, and keep detailed records of episodes which can help provide additional insight about triggers and how to avoid them.



There are many different apps available. Some just track headache, others track many symptoms of migraine. Some of the more advanced migraine apps like Migraine Buddy or Migraine Monitor will track attacks, medication use, weather patterns, allow sharing of data with others, and facilitate anonymous social networking support with other people living with migraine.

There are also pain management apps like Curable, and chronic illness management apps like Flaredown, that some people find more suitable to their needs.

Did you know?

Migraine Buddy is the most recommended app, but there are many to try. Some have lots of tools and options, and others are simpler. A good tip is to talk to your neurologist and see if there is one they particularly like, or just try a few of them until you find the one that works for you.



This fact sheet was clinically reviewed by Dr Lakshini Gunasekera (BBMed, MD, FRACP)