

Managing Migraine: Safe Treatment and Prevention Strategies

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Transcript

Hi, I'm Dr. Anthony Levinson from McMaster University. While there's no cure, migraine can often be managed with the right combination of treatment and consistent habits. Let's start by looking at medications.

For acute relief, simple pain relievers such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen and prescription triptans or gepants are effective first-line treatments. Anti-nausea medications, such as metoclopramide, can help the body absorb pain medication better and also help with associated nausea.

Treatment can be more complicated in older adults. For some, simple pain relievers and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (NSAIDs) can pose greater risks, and triptans are generally used more cautiously in people with cardiovascular disease or vascular risk factors. Gepant medications, such as ubrogepant or rimegepant, which have recently become available in Canada have fewer cardiovascular side effects, and therefore may be considered in older adults where triptans are not suitable. Other medical conditions, drug interactions, and age-related changes in how the body processes medications can also have unwanted effects. For these reasons, treatment decisions often need to be individualized.

From a lifestyle standpoint, you can manage triggers using the SEEDS method: maintain a regular sleep schedule, get consistent exercise, eat a well-balanced diet, keep a headache diary to track triggers, and use stress management techniques like mindfulness.

Understanding migraine is the first step toward taking control. For more details on which medications to avoid and how to talk to your healthcare provider, download the Choosing Wisely Canada handout, track your symptoms, and speak to your healthcare provider about a plan that will work for you.

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