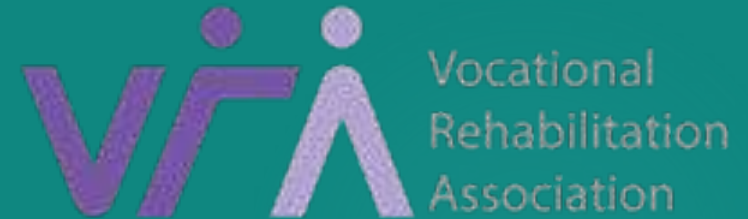




Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



# Migraine

*"IT'S NOT JUST A HEADACHE"*

# Agenda

- What is Migraine
- General symptoms of Migraine
- Phases of Migraine
- Types of Migraine
- Diagnosis challenges
- Migraine Triggers
- Migraine medications
- Migraine in the workplace - impact
- Migraine in the workplace – research findings
- Workplace triggers
- Lifestyle tips
- Programmes and services from the Migraine Association

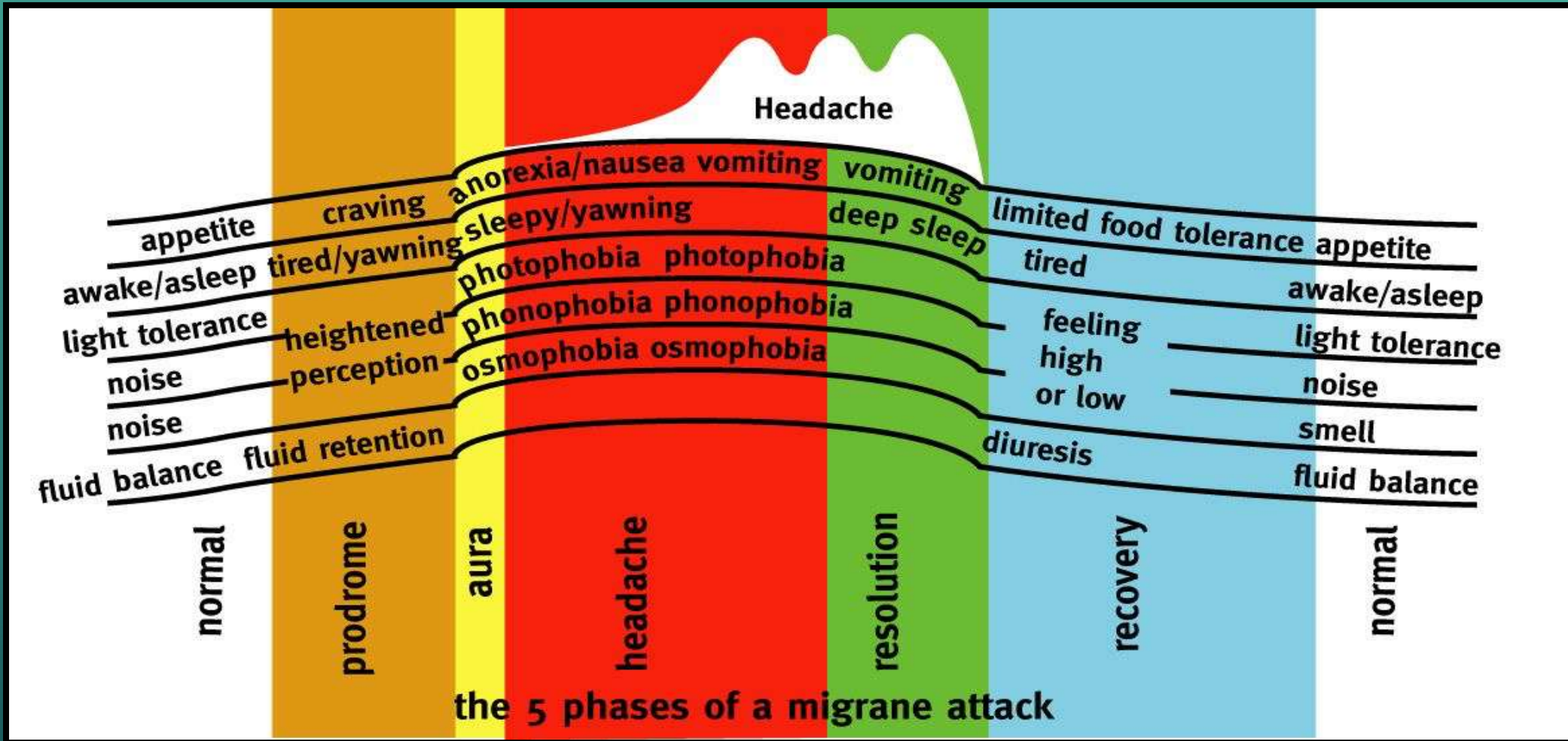
# What Is Migraine And What Causes It?

- Complex neurological condition.
- WHO describes it as the 7th most disabling disease worldwide, 1<sup>st</sup> for under 50s.
- It is a common, yet invisible life-span disease.
- The exact cause of migraine is still unknown.
- Migraine often begins at puberty and mostly affects people aged between 35 and 55 years.
- 600,000 migraineurs in Ireland (41m in Europe!)
- Disease is 3x more common in women.
- Affects 10% of children.
- It's not just a headache!

# General Symptoms of Migraine

- Moderate to extreme pain - pain scale is 1-10.
- One-sided throbbing headache, made worse by movement.
- Moderate to extreme nausea, vomiting, stomachache.
- Dizziness, vertigo.
- Heightened sensitivities - from light, sound, smell, touch – hair hurts.
- Temporary visual disturbances & blind spots (aura).
- Pins and needles in limbs, face and extremities.
- Confusion, clumsiness..... “Brain fog”.
- Fear, anxiety, depression .
- Allodynia – Skin sensitivity.
- Aphasia – Speech confusion.

# Phases Of Migraine



The Headache is generally one-sided, throbbing and made worse by movement

# Types Of Migraine

## Migraine without aura

- The most common type of migraine, accounting for up to 80% of all attacks.

## Migraine with Aura

- About 20% of people experience 'aura' in addition to some or all of the other symptoms listed

*People suffering from migraine with aura should not smoke – increased risk of stroke.*

## Aura without headache

- 1% of people with migraine experience the aura symptoms of migraine without having a headache.

## Hemiplegic Migraine

- Temporary paralysis occurs.
- Prolonged aura may occur.

## Vestibular Migraine

- Severe Dizziness/Vertigo.
- Ataxia (loss of control over body movement).
- Tinnitus.

## Abdominal Migraine

- Usually occurs in children.
- Nausea/stomach-ache.
- Usually evolves into typical migraine.

# Diagnosis Challenges

- Migraine is **under-diagnosed** and **under-treated** due to lack of awareness and stigma, clinical and social barriers, and poor access to treatment.
- The lack of knowledge about headache among healthcare providers is the principal clinical barrier (only 4 hours being dedicated to headache disorders in formal undergraduate medical training and 10 hours in specialist training).
- EMHA's 'Access to Care survey' carried out in 2021 shows that 34% of migraineurs had to visit between 4 to 5 and 8 specialists before obtaining a proper diagnosis.
- **Impact of under-diagnosis and treatment:** about 50% of people with headache disorders are primarily self-treating, without guidance by health professionals; 10% are professionally diagnosed.

# Migraine Triggers

## Migraine Triggers



- Not the actual cause of migraine.
- Implicated in about 40% of attacks.
- Dietary triggers factors estimated in only 20% of attacks.
- Everyone's triggers are individual and unique to them.
- Using a diary/app to track triggers and patterns can be very helpful
  - *Migraine Buddy*
  - *N1 Headache app*



# Migraine Medications

## Acute Treatments

- Acute treatments are used to treat an attack once it occurs . Should be taken as early as possible in the headache phase of the attack to prevent its escalation.
- **Be aware of MOH (medication overuse headache).**


## Preventative Treatments

- Preventative treatments aim to reduce the frequency of migraine attacks If migraine symptoms occur on at least 8-10 days/month.

## Alternative Treatments

- Acupuncture, yoga, massage, aerobic exercise.
- Electromagnetic Devices – mostly from specialist clinics.
- Supplements like magnesium, co-enzymeQ10 and Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin).
- MAI also have a self-management course for people living with chronic migraine.
- **People accessing alternative therapies should always see a registered practitioner and keep their doctor informed.**

# Migraine in the Workplace



**MIGRAINE  
AT WORK**

On any given day in Ireland over 13,000 people are suffering from migraine. Migraines are most prevalent among 30-40 year olds.\*

\* (CBI, Absence and Workplace Health Survey 2011.)

- Migraine is responsible for the loss of over half a million working days each year in Ireland
- It is most troublesome during people's most productive years (late teens to 50s).
- It costs the Irish economy on average €252 million per annum!
- The average migraineur takes 2 sick days per year and loses another 4 in reduced productivity.
- For those with severe migraine, the unemployment rate is four to five times greater than the average rate.

# Common Issues Impacting Migraineurs in the Workplace

- On **career advancement and earnings**: careers negatively influenced, reduced lifetime earnings, job losses, missed job opportunities.
- On **career choices** (e.g. part time / no overseas travel).
- On **ability to perform** role or carry out job to the full extent as they can have difficulty concentrating.
- On **confidence**. This adds to stress, impacts clarity of thoughts, effects time management, causes anxiety. Vicious cycle.
- On **sick leave record**.

# Workplace – Our own research findings

- ▶ Survey during July – August 2021 with 400 respondents.
  - ▶ 84% - have spoken about their migraine at work.
  - ▶ 74% - stated that their employer had NO supports / accommodations.
  - ▶ 82%- stated that their condition had a direct impact on their professional life.
  - ▶ 22% noted that they had to change their profession.
  - ▶ When asked what one change in their workplace would help:-
    - 27% said increased awareness and understanding
    - 24% said flexibility in working hours
    - 17% said change in work environment.

# Workplace - International Research

2020

## **Novartis – Migraine Management Cost Programme**

Assessed the impact of a migraine management program offered as a complimentary service by a company. The majority of the participants who completed the program had a meaningful and sustained improvement in their health.

2020

## **Malaysian banks**

Looked at the impact of migraine on workplace productivity and monetary loss. Migraine appeared to lead to substantial monetary loss attributed to absenteeism, but more importantly to presenteeism

Feb. 2021

## **Harvard Business Review**

Outlined three strategies organisations should consider when looking to better support employees and maximise productivity - raising awareness; providing tools for migraine management and making changes to the working environment.

Apr. 2021

## **Fujitsu**

Study revealed a high prevalence and disease burden among employees with migraine. Results support the development and implementation of workplace programs to improve migraine management and reduce the burden and costs associated with lost workplace productivity.

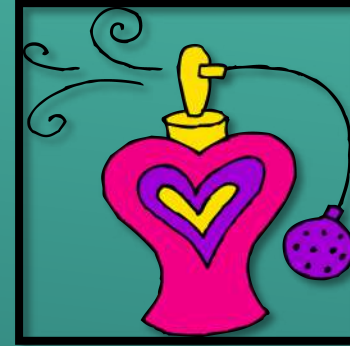
# Reducing workplace triggers



Minimise Shift Work  
Keep Stable Work Patterns



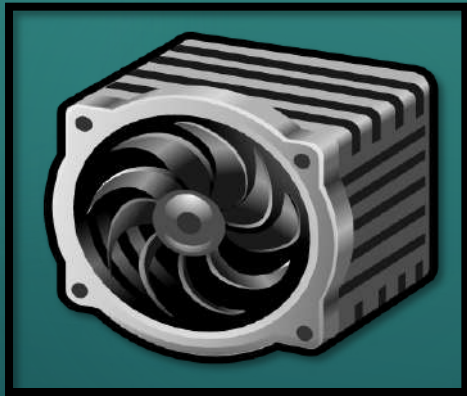
Reduce Stress



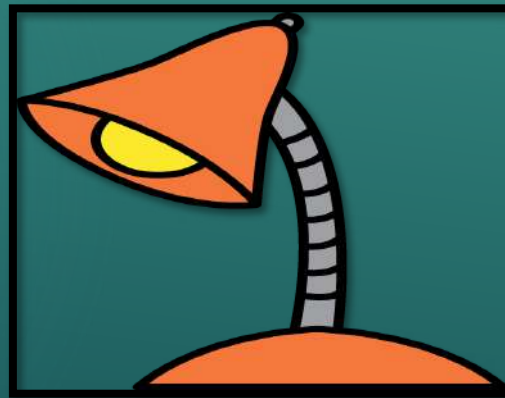
No Cosmetics /  
Chemicals



Good Posture  
Check Screen Time



Good ventilation



Better Lighting



Water &  
breaks



Provide Darkened  
Quiet Room

# Lifestyle Tips

## Routine

- Migraine brain loves routine - shift work and overtime should be avoided.

## Stress

- Good and bad stress can be triggers.
- Relaxation methods such as massage, meditation, yoga, acupuncture can help.
- Avoid negative ways to deal with stress e.g., alcohol, smoking.

## Sleep

- Too much or too little sleep can trigger or exacerbate migraine symptoms.
- Turn off all devices and TV an hour before bed & develop a wind down routine.

## Diet

- Keep foods containing alcohol, caffeine, nitrates, tyramine, citrus and MSG to a minimum.
- Try to eat once every 3 – 4 hours.
- Stay hydrated and eat an hour before sport or activity.

## Exercise

- Double-edged sword - can help but can be a trigger.
- Activities with smooth actions and low physical impact such as cycling, swimming and rowing can be good.
- Sea swimming and aerobic exercise have been shown to help – 100 Days of Vitamin Sea Film <https://www.vitaminseafilm.com/>

## Posture/Eyesight

- Avoid slouching in front of the TV.
- Check your position at a computer, the screen should be at eye level.
- Try not to sleep with too many pillows.
- Check your driving position and avoid driving too much or for too long a time - *If migraine occurs while driving, pull over if safe to do so, take your medication and have a short sleep if safe to do so.*
- Some migraine glasses are not suitable for driving, especially at night .

# Programmes / Services From MAI

## BEYOND MIGRAINE



*Listen to the Beyond Migraine Podcast*



- Online Seminars / Webinars
- Information Leaflets
- Migraine diaries for adults and children
- Website: <https://migraine.ie/>
- Social Media: @MigraineIreland on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter
- E-zine: Sign up for our online newsletter
- Become a supporter - (*€30 or €10 student unemployed or OAP*)
- Email: [info@migraine.ie](mailto:info@migraine.ie)
- Information Line: 01-906 1012
  - Tues - Fri :- 10 am – 12md & 2 pm – 4 pm