



Can You Prevent Migraines?

Chronic migraines afflict approximately 15% of the population and are up to three times more prevalent in females than males. This is chiefly due to the hormonal imbalances which women are subjected to and, along with fatigue, hunger, sleep deprivation and stress, can serve as a trigger for a migraine episode.

While a cure for migraines still eludes medical scientists, preventive treatment and relief medication do exist. However, current drugs tend to have detrimental side-effects and are not 100% effective with everyone who takes them, meaning the scientific community is always on the lookout for new innovations in the field.

Cause and effect

Very little is known as to what actually brings on migraine attacks in some individuals and not in others, though it's thought to be a chemical imbalance in the brain. It can manifest itself in throbbing, pulsating pain, accompanied by intense vomiting and blurred vision. Those suffering from them can find some relief in lying down in a dark, quiet room, since loud noises and bright lights can exacerbate the issue.

At present, migraines are generally treated via a number of different methods which can offer varying levels of relief, depending on the subject in question. Antidepressants, botox, dietary supplements and triptans (a cerebral pain blocker) are all already on the market, but some of them are unsuitable for people with pre-existing medical conditions such as high blood pressure or heart complications.

CGRP to the rescue?

For that reason, researchers have continued to pursue methods of preventing the attacks from occurring in the first place. Recent studies have focused on calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP), which is a protein found in both the nervous system and the brain which handles pain receptors and tells blood vessels and tissues how to react.

The latest developments in migraine prevention feature antibodies which attempt to block CGRP, thus removing the attendant pain. Aimovig, Ajoovy and Emgality are three drugs which belong to this new field of thinking, with Aimovig already widely available in the UAE and covered by certain insurance policies. Along with the others, it has the advantage of having very few unwanted side-effects.

Healthy body, healthy mind



Aside from medical advances, doctors agree that the most effective and efficient way to manage migraines and minimise their risk is by following a healthy lifestyle. This includes [plenty of exercise](#), a nutritious diet eaten at regular intervals, adequate hydration throughout the day and sufficient sleep patterns.

Since the body thrives on regularity, it will be in better shape to fight off the stresses and triggers which cause migraines. However, medical professionals advise that those who suffer from migraines semi-regularly (more than twice or three times a year) may wish to seek advice from their GP on whether pharmaceuticals are necessary to alleviate the problem.