

Aromatherapy and Migraine

What is Migraine?

A migraine is usually a moderate or severe headache felt as a throbbing pain on one side of the head. Many people also have symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and increased sensitivity to light or sound.

Migraine is a common health condition, affecting around one in every five women and around one in every 15 men. They usually begin in early adulthood.

There are several types of migraine, including:

- Migraine with aura – where there are specific warning signs just before the migraine begin, such as seeing flashing lights.
- Migraine without aura – the most common type, where the migraine occur without the specific warning signs.
- Migraine aura without headache, also known as silent migraine – where an aura or other migraine symptoms are experienced, but a headache doesn't develop.

Some people have migraines frequently, up to several times a week. Other people only have a migraine occasionally. It is possible for years to pass between migraine attacks.

What are symptoms of Migraine?

The main symptom of a migraine is usually an intense headache on one side of the head. The pain is usually a moderate or severe throbbing sensation that gets worse when you move and prevents you from carrying out normal activities.

In some cases, the pain can occur on both sides of your head and may affect your face or neck.

Additional symptoms

Other symptoms commonly associated with a migraine include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Increased sensitivity to light and sound – which is why many people with a migraine want to rest in a quiet, dark room.

Some people also occasionally experience other symptoms, including:

- Sweating
- Poor concentration
- Feeling very hot or very cold
- Abdominal (tummy) pain
- Diarrhea

Not everyone with a migraine experiences these additional symptoms and some people may experience them without having a headache.

Symptoms of aura

About one in three people with migraines have temporary warning symptom known as aura, before a migraine. These include:

- Visual problems – such as seeing flashing lights, zig-zag patterns or blind spots.
- Numbness or a tingling sensation like pins and needles – which usually starts in one hand and moves up your arm before affecting your face, lips and tongue.
- Feeling dizzy or off balance
- Difficulty speaking
- Loss of consciousness – although this is unusual

Aura symptoms typically develop over the course of about five minutes and last for up to an hour. Some people may experience aura followed by only a mild headache or no headache at all.

What causes of Migraine?

The exact cause of migraines is unknown, but they're thought to be the result of abnormal brain activity temporarily affecting nerve signals, chemicals and blood vessels in the brain.

It's not clear what causes this change in brain activity, but it's possible that your genes make you more likely to experience migraines as a result of a specific trigger.

Migraine triggers

Many possible migraine triggers have been suggested, including hormonal, emotional, physical dietary, environmental and medicinal factors.

These triggers are very individual but it may help to keep a diary to see if you can identify a consistent trigger or if what you're experiencing is an early symptom of a migraine attack.

Hormonal change

Some women experience migraines around the time of their period, possibly because of changes in the levels of hormones such as oestrogen around this time. These type of migraines usually occur between two days before the start of your period to three days after. Some women only experience migraines around this time, which is known as pure menstrual migraine. However, most women experience them at other times too and this is called menstrual related migraine.

Many women find their migraines improve after the menopause, although the menopause can trigger migraines or make them worse in some women.

Emotional triggers:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Tension
- Chock
- Depression
- Excitement

Physical triggers:

- Tiredness
- Poor quality sleep
- Shift work
- Neck or shoulder tension
- Jet lag
- Low blood sugar (hypoglycaemia)
- Strenuous exercise, if you're not used to it.

Dietary triggers:

- Missed, delayed or irregular meals
- Dehydration
- Alcohol
- The food additive tyramine
- Caffeine products, such as tea and coffee
- Specific foods such as chocolate, citrus fruit and cheese

Environmental triggers:

- Bright lights
- Flickering screens, such as a television or computer screen
- Smoking (or smoky rooms)
- Loud noises
- Changes in climate, such as changes in humidity or very cold temperatures
- Strong smells
- A stuffy atmosphere

For more information please visit www.nhs.uk

How aromatherapy helps for Migraine?

Migraines can be unpredictable, sometimes occurring without the other symptoms. Obtaining an accurate diagnosis can sometimes take time. There's currently no cure for migraines, although a number of treatments are available to help ease the symptoms. It may take time to work out the best treatment for you. You may need to try different types of treatment before you find the most effective ones. As well as having a healthy lifestyle and avoiding things you know trigger your migraines.

Migraine is the only disease known to be associated with a pronounced increase in olfactory sensitivity. Since odours can trigger migraine; great care is required in treating migraine sufferers with essential oils, and they should probably not be used at all during an attack.

Aromatherapy is better used as a preventative measure than as an attempted treatment for migraine. Once a migraine attack has begun, many sufferers are unable to tolerate the smell of essential oils or anybody touching their heads.

As migraine is often associated with stress, regular massage with emphasis on any muscular tension in the shoulders and neck, is the best preventative measure. Self-massage, including light tapping on the scalp is advisable.

Essential oils which can be used for Migraine conditions:

Essential Oils suggestion for Migraine

- Angelica oil (*Angelica archangelica*)
- Chamomile German oil (*Matricaria recutita*)
- Chamomile Roman oil (*Chamaenemum nobile*)
- Citronella oil (*Cymbopogon nardus*)
- Clary Sage oil (*Salvia sclarea*)

- Coriander oil (*Coriandrum sativum*)
- French Basil oil (*Ocimum basilicum*)
- Immortelle oil (*Helichrysum angustifolium*)
- Lavender oil (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
- Lemon Balm oil (*Melissa officinalis*)
- Linden Blossom oil (*Tilia europaea*)
- Peppermint oil (*Mentha piperita*)
- Spearmint oil (*Mentha spicata*)
- Sweet Marjoram oil (*Origanum marjorana*)
- Valerian oil (*Valeriana fauriei*)
- Yarrow oil (*Achilea millefolium*)

Essential Oils suggestion for Headache

- Chamomile German oil (*Matricaria recutita*)
- Chamomile Roman oil (*Chamaenemum nobile*)
- Citronella oil (*Cymbopogon nardus*)
- Clary Sage oil (*Salvia sclarea*)
- Grapefruit oil (*Citrus paradisi*)
- Hops oil (*Humulus lupulus*)
- Lavender Spike oil (*Lavandula latifolia*)
- Lavender True oil (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
- Lavandin oil (*Lavandula x intermedia*)
- Lemongrass oil (*Cymbopogon citratus*)
- Linden Blossom oil (*Tilia europaea*)
- Peppermint oil (*Mentha piperita*)
- Rose oil (*Rosa damascena*)
- Rosemary oil (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
- Rosewood oil (*Aniba rosaeodora*)
- Sweet Marjoram oil (*Origanum majorana*)
- Thyme oil (*Thymus vulgaris*)
- Violet oil (*Viola odorata*)

Essential Oils suggestion for Anxiety

- Frankincense oil (*Boswellia carteri*)
- Hyssop oil (*Hyssopus officinalis*)
- Jasmine oil (*Jasminum officinale*)
- Juniper oil (*Juniperus communis*)
- Lavender oil (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
- Neroli oil (*Citrus aurantium var. amara*)
- Sandalwood oil (*Santalum album*)
- Ylang Ylang oil (*Cananga odorata var. genuina*)

Essential Oils suggestion for Depression

- Chamomile, Roman oil (*Chamaenemum nobile*)
- Clary sage oil (*Salvia sclarea*)
- Everlasting oil (*Helichrysum italicum*)
- French Basil oil (*Ocimum basilicum*)
- Lavender oil (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
- Rose oil (*Rosa damascene, Rosa centifolia*)
- Sandalwood oil (*Santalum album*)
- Sweet Marjoram oil (*Origanum majorana*)
- Vetiver oil (*Vetiveria zizanoides*)
- Ylang Ylang oil (*Cananga odorata var.genuina*)

Essential Oils suggestion for Nervous Tension, Stress and Relaxing

- Asafetida oil (*Ferula asa-foetda*)
- Benzoin oil (*Styrax benzoin*)
- Bergamot oil (*Citrus bergamia*)
- Canadian Balsam oil (*Abies balsaea*)
- Cananga oil (*Cananga odorata*)
- Cardomon oil (*Elettaria cardamomum*)
- Cedarwood oil (*Cidrus atlantica*)
- Chamomile German oil (*Matricaria recutica*)
- Clary Sage oil (*Salvia sclarea*)
- Copaiba Balsam oil (*Copaiifera officinalis*)
- Cypress oil (*Cupressus sempervirens*)
- Frankincense oil (*Boswellia carteri*)
- French Basil oil (*Ocimum basilicum*)
- Geranium oil (*Pelargonium graveolens*)
- Jasmine oil (*Jasminum officinale*)
- Juniper oil (*Juniperus communis*)
- Lavender oil (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
- Mandarin oil (*Citrus reticulata*)
- Marjoram, Sweet oil (*Origanum majorana*)
- Patchouli oil (*Pogostemon cablin*)
- Peru Balsam oil (*Myroxylon balsamum var.pereirae*)
- Sandalwood oil (*Santalum album*)
- Vetiver oil (*Vetiveria zizanoides*)
- Ylang Ylang oil (*Cananga odorata var.genuina*)

Essential Oils suggestion for Nausea

- Cardamom oil (*Elettaria cardamomum*)
- Ginger oil (*Zingiber officinale*)
- Lemon oil (*Citrus limon*)
- Peppermint oil (*Mentha piperita*)
- Spearmint oil (*Mentha spicata*)

Always contact a qualified Aromatherapist who will guide you on the oils that are suitable for your individual needs.

Reference:

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- Aromatherapy for Health Professionals – Elsevieron Vitalsource , Price, Len; Price Shirley
- Aromatherapy an A-Z: The most comprehensive guide to Aromatherapy every published, Davis, Patricia
- The Directory of Essential Oils, Sellar, Wanda
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/migraine>
- <https://www.bupa.co.uk/health-information/directory/m/migraine>
- <https://www.migraine.com>
- <https://draxe.com/essential-oils-for-headaches/>
- <http://www.healthyandnaturalworld.com/best-essential-oils-for-migraines/>

To find a practitioner to discuss your needs [click here](#)