

# Migraine triggers may all act through a common pathway

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Credit: Sasha Wolff/Wikipedia

Migraines can be triggered by a variety of factors, including stress, sleep disruption, noise, odors, and diet. The findings of a new *Headache*

review indicate that many of these factors converge on a common pathway involving oxidative stress.

When Dr. Jonathan Borkum at the University of Maine examined studies on migraine triggers published between 1990 and 2014, he found that nearly all traditional triggers had a propensity to generate [oxidative stress](#), an imbalance between the production of [free radicals](#) and the ability of the body to counteract their harmful effects. The findings suggest that antioxidants might help prevent or preempt migraines.

"These data hint that an acute migraine attack may be an attempt by the brain to protect itself, and possibly—when you look at certain chemicals released during an attack—to heal itself," said Dr. Borkum.

"Understanding migraines may ultimately teach us how we, too, can protect the brain."

**More information:** *Headache*, [dx.doi.org/10.1111/head.12725](https://doi.org/10.1111/head.12725)

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