

Medication may stop migraines before headache starts, study shows

August 28 2024



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When taken at the first signs of a migraine, before headache pain begins, a drug called ubrogepant may be effective in helping people with migraine go about their daily lives with little or no symptoms, according

to a study published in the August 28, 2024, online issue of *Neurology*.

The study focused on people with migraine who could tell when an attack was about to happen, due to early symptoms such as sensitivity to light and sound, fatigue, neck pain or stiffness, or dizziness.

Ubrogepant is a calcitonin gene-related peptide receptor antagonist, or CGRP inhibitor. CGRP is a protein that plays a key role in the migraine process.

"Migraine is one of the most prevalent diseases worldwide, yet so many people who suffer from this condition do not receive treatment or report that they are not satisfied with their treatment," said study author Richard B. Lipton, MD, of Albert Einstein College of Medicine in Bronx, New York, and Fellow of the American Academy of Neurology.

"Improving care at the first signs of migraine, even before [headache pain](#) begins, can be a key to improved outcomes. Our findings are encouraging, suggesting that ubrogepant may help people with migraine function normally and go about their day."

The study involved 518 participants who had migraine for at least one year and two to eight migraine attacks per month in the three months before the study. All of the participants regularly experienced signs that a migraine would be starting within the next few hours. Participants were asked to treat two attacks during a two-month period.

Researchers divided participants into two groups. The first group received a placebo for their first set of pre-headache symptoms of migraine, followed by taking 100 milligrams (mg) of ubrogepant for their second instance of symptoms. The second group took ubrogepant for the first instance and placebo for the second instance.

Participants evaluated limitations on their activity in their diary using a scale ranging from zero to five, with 0 meaning "not at all limited—I could do everything"; 1, "a little limited"; 2, "somewhat limited"; 3, "very limited"; or 4, "extremely limited."

Twenty-four hours after taking the drug or a placebo, 65% of people who took ubrogepant reported themselves as "not at all limited—I could do everything," or "a little limited," compared to 48% of those who took the placebo.

Researchers found that as early as two hours post-medication, people who took the drug were 73% more likely to report that they had "no disability, able to function normally," than those who took the placebo.

"Based on our findings, [treatment](#) with ubrogepant may allow people with migraine who experience early warning signs before a migraine occurs to quickly treat migraine attacks in their earliest stages and go about their daily lives with little discomfort and disruption," said Lipton. "This could lead to an improved quality of life for those living with migraine."

Lipton noted that participants showed that based on their headache warning symptoms, they could reliably predict impending [migraine headaches](#). These findings apply only to those with reliable warning symptoms.

A limitation of the study was that participants recorded their symptoms and medication use in electronic diaries, so it is possible some people may not have recorded all the information accurately.

More information: *Neurology* (2024).

Provided by American Academy of Neurology

Citation: Medication may stop migraines before headache starts, study shows (2024, August 28) retrieved 28 August 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-08-medication-migraines-headache.html>

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