

COVID-19: Tips to reduce migraines for those susceptible to stress

March 31 2020, by From Mayo Clinic News Network



Credit: Sasha Wolff/Wikipedia

Schools and workplaces are closed. Social distancing requirements are in place. And people in many cities are being urged to stay home to prevent

further spread of COVID-19. The global pandemic has greatly disrupted everyone's lives, creating a lot of stress and anxiety.

Patients with chronic neurologic conditions, and migraines in particular, are especially susceptible to the [effects of stress](#) on the brain and the body, according to Joseph Sirven, M.D., a Mayo Clinic neurologist.

"At the end of the day, the same organ that is impacted with [migraine headaches](#) is the same organ that you feel and think with. And we know that stress increases the environment for headaches to occur," Dr. Sirven says. "So all of the stress, all of this obsessing, all of this worry about what's going on in the world can have this [negative effect](#) that it increases the chance for migraines."

Dr. Sirven offers his top five tips to de-stress at home and reduce the chances of migraines occurring:

- Limit exposure to [news media](#).
- Care for yourself by eating a [healthy diet](#), staying hydrated and getting enough sleep.
- Get some exercise, especially outside.
- Focus on the positive.
- Meditate, stretch or practice deep breathing.

Dr. Sirven also recommends having sufficient medications available, including "rescue" prescriptions and medication to reduce stress levels or aid with sleep.

"This is the time to make sure you have plenty of medication so you don't have to call anyone for any urgent refills," he says.

Given the current landscape, for patients whose migraines have required emergency intervention, Dr. Sirven suggests developing an action plan

for when to call 911.

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Citation: COVID-19: Tips to reduce migraines for those susceptible to stress (2020, March 31)
retrieved 19 September 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-03-covid-migraines-susceptible-stress.html>

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