



The Beacon

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Med-Cert Medical Management Resources

"Guiding your way to better health management"

Migraines

It is estimated that 28 million Americans suffer from migraines. More women than men get migraines and a quarter of all women with migraines suffer four or more attacks a month. Each migraine can last from four hours to three days. Occasionally, it will last longer.

What causes migraines?

The exact causes of migraines are unknown, although they are related to changes in the brain as well as to genetic causes. People with migraines may inherit the tendency to be affected by certain migraine triggers, such as fatigue, bright lights, weather changes, and others.

For many years, scientists believed that migraines were linked to expanding and constricting blood vessels on the brain's surface. However, it is now believed that migraines are caused by inherited abnormalities in certain areas of the brain.

A migraine begins when hyperactive nerve cells send out impulses to the blood vessels, causing them to clamp down or constrict, followed by dilation (expanding) and the release of prostaglandins, serotonin, and other inflammatory substances that cause the pulsation to be painful.

What triggers a migraine?

Many migraines seem to be triggered by external factors. Possible triggers include:

- **Emotional stress.** This is one of the most common triggers of a migraine headache. Migraine sufferers are generally highly affected by stressful events. During stressful events, certain chemicals in the brain are released to combat the situation (known as the "flight or fight" response). The release of these chemicals can provoke vascular changes that can cause a migraine.

Repressed emotions surrounding stress, such as anxiety, worry, excitement, and fatigue can increase muscle tension and dilated blood vessels can intensify the severity of the migraine.

- **Sensitivity to specific chemicals and preservatives in foods.** Certain foods and beverages, such as aged cheese, alcoholic beverages, and food additives such as nitrates (in pepperoni, hot dogs, luncheon meats) and monosodium glutamate (MSG, commonly found in Chinese food) may be responsible for triggering up to 30% of migraines.

- **Caffeine.** Excessive caffeine consumption or withdrawal from caffeine can cause headaches when the caffeine level abruptly drops. The blood vessels seem to become sensitized to caffeine, and when caffeine is not ingested, a headache may occur.

- **Changing weather conditions.** Storm fronts, changes in barometric pressure, strong winds, or changes in altitude can all trigger a migraine.

- **Menstrual periods**
- **Excessive fatigue**

- **Skipping meals**
- **Changes in normal sleep pattern**

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of migraine headaches can occur in various combinations and include:

- A pounding or throbbing headache that often begins as a dull ache and develops into throbbing pain. The pain can shift from one side of the head to the other, or it can affect the front of the head or feel like it's affecting the whole head.

- Sensitivity to light, noise, and odors
- Nausea and vomiting, stomach upset, abdominal pain
- Loss of appetite
- Sensations of being very warm or cold
- Paleness
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Diarrhea
- Fever (rare)

Most migraines last about four hours although severe ones can last up to a week. The frequency of migraines varies widely among individuals. It is common for a migraine sufferer to get two to four headaches per month. Some people, however, may get headaches every few days, while others only get a migraine once or twice a year.

Med-Cert provides:

Utilization Management, Maternity Management, Large Case and Wellness Disease Management, Transplant Coordination and Stop Loss Assessments
For information on any of our services, please call 866-261-5657 (toll free). We are on the Internet. Visit us at: www.medcertinc.com

Dry Hand Tips For Winter



They take a beating year-round, but winter is when hands really show their age. To help them look young, make the switch to these alternatives:

SWITCH OUT: Drying hand sanitizer

FOR: A hydrating version

Quenching aloe vera offsets the drying effect of germ-killing alcohol.

SWITCH OUT: Ordinary hand lotion

FOR: A formula with SPF

UVA light, which is present 365 days a year, prevents production of skin's natural moisturizers.

SWITCH OUT: Hot-water washing

FOR: Tepid temps

Hot H₂O strips natural skin oils—so keep the faucet on warm.

October is National Bullying Prevention Month

Parents play a key role in preventing and responding to bullying. For more information contact 888-245-0822 or go to: <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/>

DON'T FORGET TO PRECERTIFY

Med-Cert's Toll-free Precert Telephone Number is (800)-356-7126 and should be reflected on your health insurance ID cards.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the employee/participant/member to make sure precertification has been done. Many plans will reduce your benefit amount if you fail to precertify.

Group Health Plans vary from one employer to the next so it is important for you to know what your health plan requires. Call the customer service representative for your health plan if you have questions.

Below is a list of some of the common Standard Precertification Notification Requirements.

- *Inpatient Hospital Stays*
- *Inpatient Treatment for Mental and Emotional Conditions or Substance Abuse*
- *Inpatient Rehabilitation Therapy*
- *Skilled Nursing Care*
- *Outpatient Stays over 12 hours*
- *Outpatient Surgeries*
- *Physical Therapy after first 6 visits*
- *Speech Therapy after first 6 visits*
- *Home Health Care*
- *Hospice Care*
- *Maternity – on confirmation of pregnancy (or at least 2 months prior to delivery) and again on admission for delivery*
- *Outpatient Procedures – refer to your Employee Benefit Plan booklet as some plans require precertification for outpatient procedures*

Did you know??

The human liver performs 500 different functions.....

Recipe Corner



Pumpkin Pecan Pie

Ingredients

- 1/4 C butter, divided
- 1 1/4 C gingersnap cookie crumbs (about 30 cookies)
- 1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 can (15 oz) pure pumpkin
- 1 large egg
- 1 large egg white
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
- 3/4 C dark brown sugar, divided
- 2 tbsp. honey
- 3/4 C pecan halves

Directions

1. Heat oven to 350°F.
2. Melt 2 tbsps. of the butter in microwave and mix with cookie crumbs and vanilla extract in bowl. Press onto bottom and sides of 8" pie plate. Bake 10 minutes and cool.
3. Blend pumpkin, egg, egg white, cinnamon, nutmeg, and 1/2 cup of the sugar. Spread in crust.
4. Bake until filling is set around edges or knife inserted in center comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes.
5. Heat broiler. Combine honey and remaining 1/4 cup sugar and 2 tbsps. butter in small nonstick saucepan. Cook over low heat until sugar dissolves, stirring constantly. Stir in pecans to coat.
6. Spread topping over pie. Broil until bubbly and golden brown (do not burn), about 2 minutes.



This newsletter is brought to you courtesy of Med-Cert, Inc. Our sources for this edition are Web MD and Prevention magazine.