

# When Is A Headache More Than ‘Just A Headache’? T

(NAPSA)—Do you often suffer from frequent, bad headaches that make you sick to your stomach or sensitive to light and sound? Does the pain grow so bad that you have to miss days of work or time with your family and friends? If so, you may suffer from migraine headaches and not even know it. You're not alone.

“Migraine pain can occur on one or both sides of your head, but what people may not know is that migraine may also be associated with runny nose, sinus or face pain and pressure, and neck pain,” said Dr. Lisa Mannix from Headache Associates in Cincinnati, Ohio. “Because patients do not commonly associate these additional symptoms with migraine, many people may be misdiagnosed. A misdiagnosis only delays pain relief and could lead to unnecessary tests, medications and sometimes even surgery.”

## **Michelle's Misdiagnosis**

Michelle Draveski, a stay-at-home mom, suffered one migraine attack after another before being properly diagnosed. When she first went to her doctor, she was told she had “hormonal headaches” and that over-the-counter painkillers should work. But even though she took more than the recommended dose, the pain didn't go away.

“I remember my worst attack like it was yesterday,” said Draveski. “My oldest son was eight months old and I was struck with the worst headache of my life. I was miserably sick to my stomach. All I could do was lie on the cold bathroom floor with blankets over the windows to block out the light. That's when my son woke up from his nap. I tried to care for him, but I was helpless. I finally called my grandmother to come help with my son, but she ended up taking me to the emer-

gency room instead.”

Soon after this, Michelle saw a new doctor who diagnosed her with migraines and prescribed a migraine-specific medicine, Imitrex® (sumatriptan succinate) Tablets. Today, Michelle keeps her medicine with her at all times so if she gets a migraine, she can take it at the first sign of pain and go on with her life.

## **Dawn's Near Miss**

Many migraine sufferers feel as if they're missing out on life because of their condition. In fact, most worry that a migraine will interfere with a big day in their life. That's how Dawn Michelson felt when a migraine almost caused her to miss her only son's wedding.

“It was a special day and I was excited to celebrate with our new family,” said Michelson. “But all the stress of traveling, lack of sleep and a glass of red wine triggered an awful migraine attack. I took my Imitrex as soon as possible and waited for the pain to go away.”

Dawn eventually started to feel better and was able to get back to celebrating her son's special day. She added, “I truly believe that if it was not for my medication, I would have missed the day entirely.”

## **You Can Do Something About It**

More than 28 million Americans suffer from migraines and about half of those people are undiagnosed. Women make up the largest number of migraine sufferers. Studies show that migraines affect women three times more than men. If migraines go untreated, they can have a huge impact on a person's life, often making it impossible to carry on with their daily activities.

If you suffer from frequent, bad headaches, there are simple steps you can take to get the help you

need. The first step is to be aware of your symptoms, so you can tell them to your doctor. This is important because symptoms can be different from person to person and attack to attack. People who are able to clearly report their symptoms are more likely to get a proper diagnosis.

Also, there are tools available to help you know what kind of information to share with your doctor. One of these tools is the headache quiz, available at [www.headachequiz.com](http://www.headachequiz.com). On the Web site, take the quiz and talk to your doctor about the results. Getting the right diagnosis can mean getting the right treatment plan.

## **About Imitrex**

If the diagnosis is migraine, then migraine-specific prescription therapies, like Imitrex, are available for the acute treatment of migraine attacks with or without aura. Imitrex was the first prescription drug in a class of drugs called triptans to receive U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval for the acute treatment of migraine in adults. Imitrex provides relief of migraine pain and associated symptoms, without drowsiness, for many patients.

Patients should not take Imitrex if they have certain types of heart disease, history of stroke or TIAs, peripheral vascular disease, Raynaud syndrome, or blood pressure that is uncontrolled. Patients with risk factors for heart disease, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes or are a smoker, should be evaluated by a doctor before taking Imitrex. Very rarely, certain people, even some without heart disease, have had serious heart-related problems. Patients who are pregnant, nursing, or taking medications should talk to their doctor.