

Don't Let Frequent Bad Headaches Control Your Life

(NAPSA)—Imagine a headache so bad that the slightest noise or glimpse of light will increase the already intense pain and nausea you are experiencing—and your



Marcia Cross

only refuge is to lie down in a quiet, dark room. This may be what it is like if you are a person who suffers from migraine headaches. Migraine headaches affect millions of people in the U.S.—including one of the nation's most famous TV and film actresses, Marcia Cross.

More than 28 million Americans suffer from migraine headaches, which affect three times more women than men. If left untreated, migraines can disrupt your life, even making it impossible to participate in daily activities.

Fortunately, Marcia was quickly diagnosed when she saw a doctor—likely because she experiences classic migraine symptoms, including nausea and visual disturbances known as aura. Yet, despite her quick diagnosis, Marcia struggled with her migraines for years because she was unable to manage them effectively. On one occasion, the pain was so bad that she ended up in the emergency room.

Then, about 10 years ago, she finally found relief. While on the set, she experienced a migraine headache so bad that she had to be driven home. “Fortunately, a woman on the set who also experienced migraines told me about how she found relief with a migraine-specific treatment called Imitrex® [sumatriptan succinate] Tablets,” says Marcia. “That was a turning point for me. I visited my doctor again and he prescribed it for me, too. It worked for me and I have been taking it ever since.”

Since then, Marcia has also learned more about her migraines, and how stress and certain foods

can trigger them. Now, while migraines are still part of her life, they don't control it. “I'm not afraid of them anymore—I know my triggers and how to avoid them. Even so, I still may get a migraine from time to time, so I carry my prescription migraine medicine at all times. I take it at the first sign of migraine pain, so I can get back to my life,” says Marcia.

Today, Marcia Cross is speaking out about her own struggle with migraines with the hopes that her efforts will help other migraine sufferers see a doctor to get the help they need.

“I struggled for several years because, at the time, there was nothing that helped me with my migraines,” says Marcia. “But today, there is no reason to suffer. There are effective migraine-specific medications that can help manage your migraines. But the first step is to talk to a doctor and get diagnosed.”

Diagnosis sounds simple, but it can be a real challenge for migraine sufferers. In fact, nearly half of all people who suffer from migraines are undiagnosed. Migraine symptoms can vary from person to person and from attack to attack and many people don't experience the classic migraine symptoms—making diagnosis more difficult.

Misdiagnosis can be a problem for migraine sufferers, too. Migraine pain can occur on both sides of your head, and can include additional symptoms like a runny nose, sinus/face pain and pressure, and neck pain. Because patients don't commonly associate these additional symptoms with migraine, many people may be misdiagnosed with tension or “sinus” headache. This presents a real problem, because misdiagnosis of migraine as “sinus” headache can lead to unnecessary expense, including tests, medications and sometimes even surgery. This can also delay the relief of pain for migraine sufferers.

What You Can Do

If you suffer from frequent bad headaches, there are simple steps you can take to get the help you need. Learning to recognize and explain your symptoms is the first step. Migraine sufferers who are able to accurately report their symptoms are more likely to obtain the proper diagnosis.

Because symptoms can vary from attack to attack and person to person, it can seem challenging to know what kind of information to share with your doctor. But there are tools that can help. “One tool that can help you relay what you are experiencing is the Headache Quiz, available at www.headachequiz.com,” says Marcia. “I encourage anyone suffering from frequent bad headaches to take the quiz and talk to their doctor about their results. Once they get the right diagnosis, they can get the help they need.”

Important Safety Information About Imitrex®

Imitrex is approved for the acute treatment of migraines with or without aura in adults.

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 being 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.

Please consult full prescribing information available at www.imitrex.com.

For more information about migraines, visit www.headachequiz.com.