

Migraine Pain Doesn't Have To Ruin Your Holiday

(NAPSA)—Holiday parties...visits with family and friends...cooking, baking...and shopping, shopping, shopping! For migraine sufferers, some of the very ways we celebrate can bring on an attack. However, treatments are available to stop migraine pain before it puts a stop to your holiday enjoyment.

"It is important that people seek treatment advice and prepare now before they are caught off-guard by a holiday migraine," said Loretta Mueller, D.O., of the University Headache Center in Moorestown, New Jersey. "Migraine sufferers who are prepared can enjoy the season if they are aware of and avoid their triggers, bring along their migraine medicine wherever they go, and take it at the first sign of a headache."

Migraine is an intense, throbbing headache, usually located on one side of the head, that affects 30 million people in the U.S. or 12 percent of the population. Approximately 70 percent of all migraine sufferers are women.

The following tips can help you recognize and minimize a holiday migraine:

Plan Ahead:

✓ Don't ignore troublesome symptoms:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Sensitivity to light and sound
- Visual symptoms such as flashing lights or wavy lines (also called "aura")

✓ See your physician to confirm you have migraine and discuss treatment options.

• Recent advances in migraine treatments include a class of drugs called triptans, such as AXERT™ (almotriptan malate tablets). Triptans work in part by



shrinking blood vessels in the head that become enlarged during an attack.

✓ Keep your doctor's name and contact information handy.

✓ Fill your migraine prescription before holiday travel or festivities.

✓ Start shopping early to avoid the stress of last minute mall trips.

✓ Be aware of your body:

• Intense physical exertion, sexual activity, menstruation, fatigue and hormone changes can cause migraines.

✓ Foods including chocolate and artificial sweeteners, and some alcoholic beverages such as red wine, can trigger a migraine. Know what foods bring on your migraine and avoid them.

✓ Be prepared for environmental triggers such as bright lights, weather changes and secondhand smoke.

Be Smart:

✓ Don't sacrifice regular meals, sleep or exercise in the rush of

holiday activity.

✓ If you are traveling long distances, leave yourself plenty of time to minimize stress and pack snacks for the trip.

✓ Watch the holiday buffets—if you are attending a party where you know trigger foods will be present, eat a small meal before going to help resist the temptation to eat foods that may cause a migraine.

Take Charge:

✓ Recognize when a migraine is coming on.

✓ Take your medication at the first sign of an attack.

✓ Lie down in a dark room or use a cold compress to help alleviate your headache.

✓ Record triggers (i.e., food, activities, etc.) and avoid them in the future.

For more information about common migraine triggers, hints on managing the condition, coping tips and information, both for diagnosed sufferers and for those who aren't sure if those bad headaches are actually migraines, visit www.axert.com.

10 Common Holiday Migraine

Triggers:

1. Alcoholic beverages
2. Chocolate
3. Fatty foods
4. Lack of sleep
5. Vigorous activity (exercise, sex)
6. Irregular or skipped meals
7. Motion, travel
8. Glare, bright lights
9. Secondhand smoke
10. Weather changes