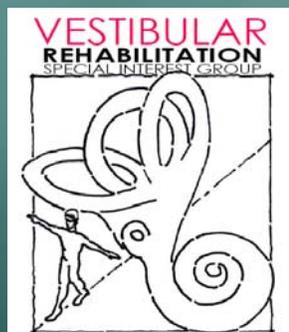


FACT SHEET



Migraine Diet Triggers

Author: Britta N. Smith, PT, MMSc



Controlling Migraine Associated Dizziness with Diet

When most people of a migraine, they think of a severe headache. But not all migraines cause head pain. In some people, migraines cause spinning dizziness (vertigo), dizziness, or unsteadiness. This is called *migraine-associated dizziness*. Some researchers think that one third of migraine patients have some type of dizziness associated with a migraine. People who have vertigo, dizziness or unsteadiness from a migraine usually respond to the same treatment used for headache symptoms alone. Treatment of migraine associated dizziness is best if a combination of medication, therapy, and lifestyle changes is used.

Finding out causes (or triggers) migraine dizziness and avoiding doing those things can help control attacks. Stress, poor sleeping patterns, hormone changes, neck pain, smoking, and even weather changes have been shown to trigger symptoms. Some migraine sufferers are sensitive to specific foods and are able to reduce their symptoms by avoiding those foods.

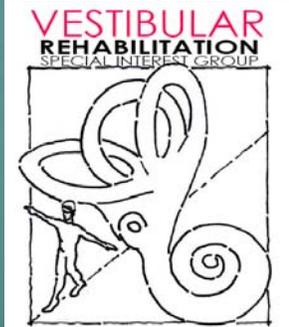
The list of foods that have been reported to cause migraine symptoms is quite long. But the most common foods are MSG (monosodium glutamate), aged cheese, red wine and beer, and chocolate. These foods contain substances called amines that are thought to trigger migraine symptoms in some people. There are many websites that provide lists of foods containing the different amines in great detail. The more common foods that have been identified as triggering a migraine may be summarized as follows:

- Cheeses that are aged or ripened (such as Blue cheeses, Cheddar, Gouda, Brie, Parmesan, Romano, Gruyere)
- Alcohol, especially red wine or beer
- Chocolate, cocoa, or carob
- Milk products – sour cream, yogurt, cheesecake, buttermilk
- Asian foods such as miso, tempeh, and foods prepared with soy sauce or Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)
- Smoked, processed or cured meats (such as hot dogs, bacon, sausage, bologna, salami, ham)
- Pickled foods (such as pickles, sauerkraut, herring, olives)
- Nuts and peanut butter



1111 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-1488
Phone: 800-999-2782,
Ext 3237
Fax: 703-706-8578
Email: neuropt@apta.org
www.neuropt.org

Migraine Diet Triggers



Baked items with yeast (yeast doughnuts, raised cakes and hot breads)
Certain fruits (citrus fruits, bananas, pineapple, avocados, figs)
Caffeine from coffee, tea or cola drinks

So how do you find out which foods might cause your attacks? Eliminating all the foods that might cause symptoms from the diet can be difficult. Some people have taken that approach and have switched to a diet of plain meat, rice, pasta or potato, plain vegetable and water. Then various migraine trigger foods are introduced one at a time to determine what foods might cause a headache or dizziness attack. The advantage of this technique is it is easy to see which foods cause symptoms. But many people find this method hard to follow because the diet is so limited.

An easier way to look at food triggers is to keep a detailed log of everything you eat and note when a migraine or dizziness attack happens. Look closely at the foods eaten within 24 hours of the attack. Some food triggers cause symptoms immediately; others will delay symptoms until the next day.

With either approach, eating regularly and drinking enough fluids throughout the day can help reduce symptoms. Low blood sugar from skipping meals can cause a headache or dizzy spell. Drinks containing Aspartame (NutraSweet) or caffeine can cause symptoms and should be avoided. Adopting a more healthful lifestyle can also produce positive changes in symptoms. Regular aerobic exercise is valuable in reducing stress, another potential migraine trigger.

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