Understanding migraine
If you have migraine, you are not alone. Migraine is common in people of all ages. Both men and women get it, though it is 3 times more common in women. Some people only have migraine once in a while, but about 25% of people with this condition have migraine on 15 or more days a month. Healthcare providers call this “chronic migraine.”

Migraine symptoms often include:

- Moderate to severe pounding or stabbing headache
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Changes in vision
- Sensitivity to light, sounds, or smells

Migraine is painful, and it can keep you from being active and enjoying daily activities. It can also be linked to serious health problems. However, there is hope. Knowing that you have migraine and getting effective treatment are the first steps to living a healthy, active life.

Lifestyle patterns or situations that can trigger migraine
We are not sure what causes migraine, but attacks may be related to one or more triggers, which can be different for each person. Identifying and changing lifestyle patterns or situations that trigger migraine can help lower the number of migraine attacks. Potential triggers include:

- Certain foods and drinks, such as alcohol, caffeine, chocolate, aged cheeses including blue cheese, nuts, MSG, and some processed foods
- Not drinking enough water
- Stress (such as moving, having a baby, or starting a new job) and the release of stress (called “stress let-down”)
- Hormone changes due to puberty, menstrual cycles, menopause, or medication
- Changes in sleep, eating, or exercise habits, such as when you travel, skip meals, or go on a diet

Can you identify any of your triggers? List them here.

Ask your healthcare provider about keeping a headache diary. This can help you learn more about your headaches and identify any lifestyle patterns or situations that may trigger migraine attacks.

My migraine plan
Step 1—Make healthy choices

- **Sleep well**—talk to your healthcare provider about how to get the rest you need
- **Eat well**—ask your healthcare provider about foods to eat and foods to avoid; skipping meals and eating a lot of processed foods and sugar can cause migraine or make it worse
- **Stay hydrated**—drink a minimum of 6 to 8 glasses of water each day; too little water is a common migraine trigger
- **Be active**—exercise 3 to 5 days a week
- **Be well**—do deep breathing or other relaxation exercises to lower your stress

Notes from my healthcare provider
Step 2—Prevent migraine with medication
Many different medications are available to help prevent migraine. Your healthcare provider can help you find one or more that work for you. You may need to try more than one to find the best option.

My healthcare provider prescribed __________________________ to prevent my migraine.

Directions ____________________________________________

Side effects to watch for __________________________________

Call the office if _________________________________________

If a medication does not work well, your healthcare provider can help you find a different one. But give it time. It may take several weeks before your medicine begins to work well. Do not stop taking your medication suddenly. Call the office if you have migraine symptoms or other health problems while taking your migraine medications.

Step 3—Create a rescue plan
Migraine sometimes happens even if you make healthy choices and take medication to prevent it. If you have a migraine, you can take "rescue" medication.

My rescue medication is ________________________________

If I feel sick to my stomach or vomit, I can take ________________________________

If you still have a migraine after following your rescue plan, call your healthcare provider’s office for help. Make a plan for what to do after office hours and on weekends or holidays.

Learn more about migraine
You can learn more about migraine from the Web sites below. Your healthcare provider might also recommend a Web site, book, or other information.

• National Headache Foundation: www.headaches.org
• American Migraine Foundation: www.americanmigrainefoundation.org
• American Headache Society: https://americanheadachesociety.org/patient-education

Other resources my healthcare provider recommends ________________________________

Questions for my healthcare provider
1. ______________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________

Notes: __________________________________________________

My healthcare provider’s office number: ___________________________ Office hours: ___________________________

Number to call after hours, on weekends, and holidays: ___________________________