

Migraine Clinics

This fact sheet explains the role of migraine clinics in the management of migraine experienced by adults, how to be referred and what to expect if you visit a clinic. This is one in a series of fact sheets written and researched by The Migraine Trust to help you understand and manage your condition.

What is a migraine clinic?

A headache or migraine clinic specialises in the diagnosis and treatment of migraine and head pain. The clinics are often linked to a neurology department in a hospital and are directed by a consultant neurologist or doctor with a particular interest and expertise in migraine. They are usually staffed by multi-disciplinary teams.

A migraine clinic will be able to confirm that your attacks are migraine, review your current treatment and suggest ways in which you can manage your condition.

The clinic staff build up a wealth of expertise on the types of migraine, new treatments and will often be able to call upon the services of other experts.

Does everyone with migraine need to attend a clinic?

Most people with migraines who ask for a doctor's advice are cared for solely by their GP. There are between 15 and 20 specialist migraine clinics across the UK. This is not enough to serve everyone with headache and migraine.

If you do not respond well to treatment or if your migraines are not being well managed, further investigation may be needed. The reasons your GP may refer you on to a specialist clinic include:

- doubt over the diagnosis of migraine;
- a rarer form of migraine may be suspected;
- other headaches besides migraine are present and may complicate your diagnosis;
- the treatment is not working well for you;

- your migraines or headaches are getting worse/more frequent;
- at your request.

How can I be referred to a migraine clinic?

All NHS migraine clinics will require a letter of referral from a medical practitioner before they will accept a new patient. This is most likely to be your GP but could be a hospital doctor or other healthcare professional within the NHS.

Do the clinics have long waiting lists?

The number of new patients that a clinic can see depends very much on the number of staff they have and their opening times. The majority of clinics in the UK are open for a few hours per week and most have a waiting list. For most people, the first appointment will take a few weeks, although some clinics have waiting lists of several months.

How should I prepare for my first visit?

A Migraine Diary

Before you attend the migraine clinic for your first appointment it is worthwhile to keep a diary of your attacks. Keeping a record of these can be very helpful in assisting the doctor to have a clear picture of the migraines. This is also important because as there is no specific test to diagnose migraine, much will be based on your description. The diary can include information on:

- when the headache starts (time of day, day of the week)
- how often headaches occur
- where the pain is
- the type of pain (throbbing, piercing etc.)

- if there are other symptoms (such as being sick or having vision problems)
- how long the attacks last
- what treatment you take
- how effective treatment is (or isn't)

The diary can include information on as many aspects of daily life as possible to see what may be a trigger. This can include:

- medication you take for other conditions
- vitamins or any health products taken
- missed or delayed meals
- social and work activities
- exercise you take
- how much sleep you have
- other factors, such as the weather
- women should record details of their menstrual cycle.

It is often useful noting if you did anything different prior to the attack such as missing a meal, particularly during the 24 hours before the headache starts. The diary may then highlight a build up of triggers which could be avoided or minimised.

You can find a migraine diary on our website at www.migrainetrust.org

Medication Record

The doctor will need to know the names and doses of any medication you have tried before. This should include herbal remedies and complementary treatments (such as acupuncture, homeopathy, herbalism) that you have tried.

What will happen on my first appointment?

Your first visit to a clinic is likely to be much longer than the time you would usually spend with your GP. The doctor at the clinic will need to take a very detailed history about your condition including your medication (both prescription and over-the-counter drugs), any complementary or alternative remedies you are taking, when your migraines started and how often they occur. The doctor will ask about the ways in which you have taken your drugs – whether they have been in tablet form or through inhalers, injections or suppositories.

You will probably have a physical examination. This may provide important clues for the doctor. An

awkward posture or tenderness in the muscles at the back of the neck, for example, are important to note as they may be a contributory factor to your migraines. During your first visit, do ask questions about your condition – this may save you unnecessary worries after your visit.

What treatment will I be offered?

The complex nature of migraines means that the treatments available are varied and differ from person to person. There is currently no cure for migraine.

Once the diagnosis of migraine has been confirmed, the clinic staff will be able to suggest ways in which you can manage the attacks. This may involve trying new medication, advice on lifestyle, suggestions on how to cope with your symptoms, and the self-management of your particular experience with migraine to help minimise its impact upon your everyday life.

Many people find that by analysing their lifestyle in detail, they can reduce the number of attacks and manage their condition effectively. This process can be quite complicated as there is more to reducing the number of migraines than avoiding one food or drink. People rarely have one trigger factor which results in a migraine. In most cases, there is a build up of trigger factors, which may include weather changes, changes in sleep patterns, missing a meal and hormonal changes in women.

If your migraines cannot be managed in this way the doctor may prescribe preventative drugs, although this is not needed for the majority of people with migraine.

Follow Up Visits

It is not always possible to make a diagnosis of migraine during your first appointment. That may take a series of visits and involve keeping a detailed diary. If you do not have migraine you may be referred to a centre that deals with your type of headache. After a few visits to a clinic, many people find that they do not need to return, as they can manage their own condition. You can of course be referred back again if the need arises.

After your visit the clinic will write to your GP to tell them about any treatment that has been suggested and keep them informed of any progress you make.

How can I find out about local clinics?

This factsheet includes a list of the migraine and headache clinics in the UK known to The Migraine Trust. It also includes a list of hospital neurological departments with an interest in headache and migraine.

This list may be helpful to your GP if it is decided that you need to be referred for specialist advice.

The information is regularly updated. If you hear about any other clinics please do let us know.

References Used:

- MacGregor, A. **Understanding Migraine and Other Headaches**. Family Doctor Publications (BMA) 2002
- The Migraine Trust website. www.migrainetrust.org
- **Hot Topics in Headache**. London: The Migraine Trust 2002

Further useful contacts:

OUCH UK (for Cluster Headaches)

Norham House
Mountenoy Road
Moorgate
Rotherham S60 2AJ
Tel: 0161 272 1702
Website: www.ouchuk.org

Pain Concern

PO Box 13256
Haddington EH41 4YD
Tel: 01620 822572

Migraine Action Association

Unit 6, Oakley Hay Lodge Business Park
Great Folds Road
Great Oakley
Northants NN18 9AS
Tel: 01536 461333
Website: www.migraine.org.uk

World Headache Alliance

Email: mail@w-h-a.org
Website: www.w-h-a.org

This factsheet is available in larger print on request.



This fact sheet has been awarded the health information quality triangle Mark by CHIQ (Centre for Health Information Quality) CHIQ was established by the NHS Executive in 1997 to maximise public confidence in health information.

This fact sheet was produced by the Education Department at The Migraine Trust. The information in this fact sheet has been read and checked for accuracy and relevance by headache professionals and people living with migraine.

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Migraine Clinics in the United Kingdom (May 2007)

The Migraine Clinic
Horton Hospital
Oxford Road
Banbury OX16 9AL
01295 275 500
01295 229 064

The Headache Clinic
Dept of Neurology
Royal United Hospital
Combe Park
Bath BA1 3NG
01225 428 331

The Migraine Clinic
Royal Victoria Hospital
Grosvenor Road
Belfast BT12 6BA
028 9024 0503

The Migraine Clinic
Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals
DGM Building
Dudley Road
Winson Green
Birmingham B18 7QH
0121 507 5956

The Migraine Clinic
Royal Sussex County Hospital
Eastern Road
Brighton BN2 5BE
01273 696955

Neurology Clinic (Headaches)
Chesterton Medical Centre
Union Lane
Chesterton
Cambridge CB4 1PX
01223 883723

The Headache Clinic
Department of Neurology
University Hospital of Wales Heath Park
Cardiff CF14 4XW
029 2074 7747
029 2074 2833

The Headache Clinic
Western General Hospital
Crewe Road
Edinburgh EH4 2XU
0131 537 2097
For patients from Scotland only

Headache Clinic
Southend Hospital
Prittlewell Chase
Westcliff on Sea
Essex SS0 0RY
01702 221284

The Exeter Headache Clinic
St Thomas Health Centre
Cowick Street
Exeter EX4 1HJ
01392 676 679
Will also see patients privately

Migraine Clinic
Institute of Neurological Sciences
Neurology Outpatients Dept
1345 Govan Road
Glasgow G51 4TF
0141 201 1100 (ext. 61983)

Surrey Headache Service
C/o Merrow Park Surgery
Kingfisher Drive
Guildford GU4 7ET
01483 450 755

Headache Services
The Migraine Clinic
Department of Neurology
Hull Royal Infirmary
Anlaby Road
Hull HU3 2JZ
01482 675 591

The Migraine Clinic
Beaumont Hospital
Beaumont
Dublin 9
00 353 1 809 3000
00 353 1 809 3342

The Princess Margaret Migraine Clinic
Charing Cross Hospital
Fulham Palace Road
London W6 8RF
020 8846 1303

The City of London Migraine Clinic
22 Charterhouse Square
London EC1M 6DX
020 7251 3322
Registered Medical Charity, accepts self referral

Kings Headache Services
Kings College Hospital
Denmark Hill
London SE5 9RS
020 7346 5364

The Headache Group
Institute of Neurology
The National Hospital of Neurology and
Neurosurgery
Queen Square
London WC1N 3BG
020 7837 3611 ext. 3017/3664

The Migraine Clinic
The Royal London Hospital
Whitechapel
London E1 1BB
020 7377 7359

The Headache Clinic
Milton Keynes General Hospital
Eaglestone
Standing Way
Milton Keynes MK6 5LD
01908 660033

The Migraine Clinic
Department of Neurology
Northampton General Hospital
Cliftonville
Northampton NN1 5BD
01604 545 850

Migraine Clinic
Neurology Dept
Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital
Colney Lane
Norwich NR4 7UY
01603 286286

The Migraine Clinic , Neurology OPD
Leicester General Hospital
Gwendolan Road
Leicester LE5 4PW
0116 249 0490

Headache Services
Department of Neurology
The Radcliffe Infirmary
Woodstock Road
Oxford OX2 6HE
01865 224 923

The Headache Clinic
The Neurology Department
Derriford Hospital
Plymouth PL19 9EW
0845 155 8155

The Migraine Clinic
Royal Preston Hospital

Sharoe Green Lane North
Preston, Lancs. PR2 9HT
01772 522 556

Essex Centre for Neurological Sciences
Queen's Hospital
Rom Valley Way
Romford RM7 0AG
01708 435000

The Neurology Service
Salford PCT
Sandringham House
Windsor Street
Salford M5 4DG
0161 212 4800

The Migraine Clinic
Park Health Centre
190 Duke Street
Sheffield S2 5QQ
0114 279 5565

The Migraine Clinic, Department of Neurology
North Staffordshire Royal Infirmary
Princes Road
Hartshill
Stoke on Trent ST4 7LN
01782 715 444

The Headache Clinic
Dept of Neurology
York District Hospital
Wigginton Road
York YO31 8HE
01904 631 313
01904 725 752

The Headache Clinic
Pinderfields General Hospital
Aberford Road
Wakefield WF1 4DG
01924 212 359

Migraine and Headache Acupuncture Clinic
Royal London Homoeopathic Hospital
60 Great Ormond Street
London WC1N 3HR
Telephone: 0845 1555 000
Patient services: 020 7391 8888

Private Clinic run by Nurses

HEX Private Migraine Clinic
PO Box 78
Honiton
Devon EX14 2ZN
07989 900 693

Children's Migraine Clinics, attached to Departments of Neurology or Paediatrics

The Children's Migraine Clinic
Department of Neurology
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital
Cornhill Road
Aberdeen
AB25 2ZG
01224 681 818
01224 554 069

Children's Headache Service
Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust
Alder Hey
Eaton Road
Liverpool
L12 2AP

Headache Clinic
Fraser of Allander Neurosciences Unit
Royal Hospital for Sick Children
Yorkhill
Glasgow G3 8SJ
0141 201 0000

The Children's Migraine Clinic
Department of Neurology
Great Ormond Street Hospital
For Children
Great Ormond Street
London WC1N 3JH
020 7405 9200
020 7813 8308

The Children's Migraine Clinic
Department of Paediatrics
University Hospital of Hartlepool
Holdforth Road
Hartlepool
TS24 9AH
01429 266 654
01429 522 800

The Children's Migraine Clinic
Department of Paediatrics
Stirling Royal Infirmary NHS Trust
Livilands
Stirling
FK8 2AU
01786 434 000

Neurology Department, with an interest in Migraine/Headache

Department of Neurology
Basildon & Thurrock University Hospitals
Nethermayne
Basildon
Essex SS16 5NL
01268 533 911

Department of Neurology
Addenbrooke's NHS Trust
PO Box 165
Hills Road
Cambridge CB2 0QQ
01223 245 151
01223 217 346

Department of Neurology
Countess of Chester NHS Trust
Liverpool Road
Chester CH2 1UL
01244 365 000
01244 366 411

Department of Neurology
Colchester General Hospital
Turner Road
Colchester CO4 5JL
01206 747 474

General Neurology
Diana Princess of Wales Hospital
Scartho Road
Grimsby
DN33 2BA
01472 874111

Department of Neurology
St James's Hospital
Beckett Street
Leeds LS9 7TF
0113 243 3144

Department of Neurology
Royal Victoria Infirmary
Queen Victoria Road
Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE1 4LP
0191 232 5131

Neurosciences Department
Queen's Medical Centre
University Hospital
Clifton Boulevard
Nottingham NG7 2UH
0115 924 9924

Department of Neurology
Queen Alexandra's Hospital
Southwick Hill Road
Cosham
Portsmouth PO6 3LY
023 9228 6000
023 9228 6807

Department of Neurology
Southampton General Hospital
Tremona Road
Shirley
Southampton SO16 6YD
02380 777 222
02380 796 067

Department of Neurology
Staffordshire General Hospital
Weston Road
Stafford ST16 3SA
01785 257 731
01785 230 238

Department of Neurology
Taunton and Somerset Hospital
Musgrove Park
Taunton TA1 5DA
01823 333 444