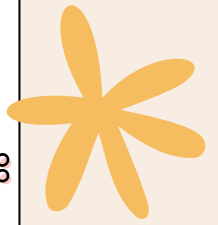
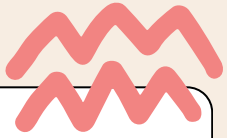




UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS WITH CHRONIC MIGRAINES: A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS



Chronic migraines are different than headaches.



Common Triggers²:

- Bright lights or loud noises
- Stress (related to schoolwork or tests)
- Changes in sleep routines
- Skipping a meal or dehydration
- Certain foods or beverages
- Hormonal changes during adolescence

You or your student can learn to recognize early warning signs and triggers!

- Migraines are more than just headaches. Pediatric migraine is one of the most common neurological disorders affecting 10-20% of school-aged children severely affecting their day-to-day functioning¹.
- A migraine involves moderate to severe head pain that may worsen with movement and is often accompanied by additional symptoms²:
 - Sensitivity to light
 - Sensitivity to sound
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Dizziness
 - Fatigue
 - Difficulty concentrating
- Some students experience auras, which are warning signs before a migraine begins. This includes flashing lights, blind spots, tingling sensations, or temporary difficulty speaking².
- Migraines can last as little as one hour or up to a full day.²

What might this look like in your classroom?

Your student may appear disengaged, tired, or irritable during or after a migraine. Without understanding the condition, this could look like the student has a lack of motivation or behavioral issues³.

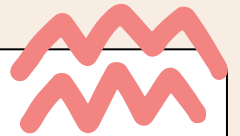
Pediatric migraines are associated with missed school days and decreased academic functioning³.

Depending on pain severity and frequency, this can affect attention, concentration, and school engagement⁴.



HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT IN THE CLASSROOM?

Supports in the classroom⁵:



1. *Recognize early warning signs.*

If a student reports their symptoms, take it seriously.

2. *Allow prompt access to treatment.*

Allow them to go the school nurse and understand early treatment may prevent a longer absence.

3. *Provide environmental supports.*

Allow students to dim screens/lights when possible, seat them away from bright/loud areas, provide short breaks, offer flexibility with due dates during an episode.

4. *Maintain open communication.*

Communicate with families if migraines become frequent or worsen, work with school nurse, and help develop an accommodation plan or 504 if needed.

Common Misconceptions:

- *"It's just a bad headache"* Migraines cause severe pain and multiple physical symptoms that interfere with daily functioning¹.

- *"They just want to get out of coming to school."*

A child or adolescent's chronic tension-type headaches are real responses (not excuses) to personal, family or school-related stress or challenges.²

- *"They can push through the pain."*

Early treatment and rest can reduce migraine severity and prevent longer absences from school.

Understanding migraines helps reduce stigma and ensures students feel supported rather than dismissed².

Resources:

American Migraine Foundation

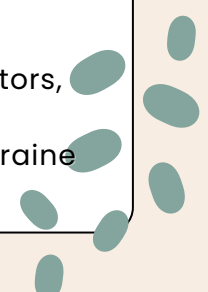
<https://americanmigrainefoundation.org>

Provides educational materials about migraine symptoms, treatments, and support strategies for children and adolescents.

Migraine at School

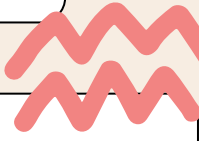
<https://www.migraineatschool.org>

Offers school-specific resources for educators, including accommodation strategies and guidance for supporting students with migraine disorders.





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