

IBUPROFEN

THE SCIENCE: Used to prevent migraines for centuries throughout Europe, this herb has a strong track record of reducing the frequency and severity of episodes as well as the vomiting and nausea that often accompany attacks.

HOW IT WORKS: One theory is that it prevents inflammation by discouraging the body's release of histamines.

RX: One 25 to 50 mg. capsule, twice daily for at least four to six weeks.

DRAWBACKS: Do not use if you're lactating or pregnant (the herb was also traditionally used as an abortifacient) or for more than six months without taking a brief hiatus.

ACUPUNCTURE

THE SCIENCE: At least two recent trials have found that it is as effective as drugs at preventing episodes, and one showed that migraineurs (as sufferers are called) who received weekly treatments for three months reported fewer days of agony than those who went without.

HOW IT WORKS: Acupuncture stimulates the nervous system to release chemicals in the muscles, spinal cord, and brain that help to decrease inflammation and pain.

RX: In the majority of studies, twice-weekly needling for six to twelve weeks yielded the longest-lasting relief.

DRAWBACKS: It's not as effective while you're suffering through the mind-numbing misery of an attack.

MAGNESIUM

THE SCIENCE: Data suggest that eating foods rich in the mineral (whole grains, legumes, figs, broccoli, spinach, chard, and nuts) or popping supplements can help stave off attacks.

HOW IT WORKS: Half of all migraineurs are deficient in magnesium,

Sweet relief

From acupuncture to botanicals, all-natural strategies to end migraine misery are increasingly popular—and scientifically sound. By Hannah Wallace.

which is thought to stabilize blood-vessel walls and restore normal function to serotonin receptors in the brain.

RX: Aim for 400 to 700 mg. a day, with just 200 mg. from supplements.

DRAWBACKS: Supplements may cause diarrhea and stomach irritation and should not be taken by those with impaired kidneys.

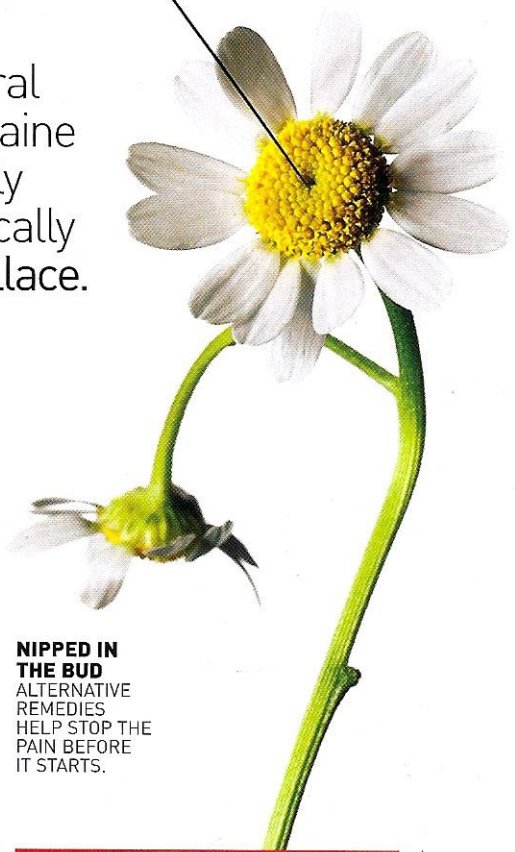
**THE
ELIMINATION
DIET**

THE SCIENCE: Triggers include dairy products, eggs, chocolate, citrus, meat, and wheat. Red wine, draft beer, caffeinated drinks, and additives such as aspartame, sucralose (Splenda), and nitrites can also induce migraines.

HOW IT WORKS: Swear off all potential irritants for two weeks, and then reintroduce them one by one every other day to see which is the culprit.

RX: Eat lots of what nutritionists call "pain-safe foods" (brown rice; cooked or dried fruits; cooked vegetables, except eggplant), and keep problematic items out of your grocery basket.

DRAWBACKS: Living without your vices: alcohol and chocolate.



NIPPED IN THE BUD
ALTERNATIVE REMEDIES HELP STOP THE PAIN BEFORE IT STARTS.

MASSAGE

THE SCIENCE: A randomized, controlled trial published in the *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* in 2006 found that people with migraines who received weekly massages for six weeks slept better and had less frequent attacks.

HOW IT WORKS: Anxiety and poor sleep are known to cause migraines. Massage decreases tension, heart rate, and stress hormones.

RX: A weekly hour-long session from a therapist who practices neuromuscular massage, with a special emphasis on the upper back, neck, and head.

DRAWBACKS: None, except finding time for regular rubdowns. □