

- Sleep / Smoking / Drinking of alcoholic beverages / Stress

The battle against migraines starts with your plate

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Migraines — those debilitating headaches that pulsate and pound — affect around 1.1 billion people, making it the second leading cause of disability worldwide, according to a study published in *The Lancet* journal. While their exact cause remains a mystery, clinical nutritionist Rashi Chahal, says that several factors can contribute to migraines including genetics, environmental triggers, hormonal changes, lack of sleep, smoking, alcohol and stress.



“Certain foods can also act as triggers, such as foods rich in tyramine that is commonly found in red wine or aged cheeses, processed meats and foods with monosodium glutamate (MSG). Alcohol and excess caffeine can also result in migraines,”

Chahal tells us.

On the other hand, there are several foods that have antiinflammatory properties and can help reduce the frequency of migraines. Diksha Dayal, HOD and senior dietician, Nutrition and Health, Shalby Sanar International Hospitals, lists some of them:

MAGNESIUM SUPPLEMENTATION

Magnesium is an important nutrient for the body. Its deficiency can contribute to migraine development as it alters neurotransmitter release. It is beneficial to consume magnesium-rich items such as cashews, almonds, avocados and bananas.

HYDRATING BEVERAGES

While drinking plenty of water is essential to keep migraines at bay, drinks such as coconut water, fresh-lime water, fruit-infused decoctions, buttermilk and peppermint tea can also help manage migraines.

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

The adequate consumption of Omega-3 fatty acids may reduce the frequency and severity of migraine attacks. These include walnuts, soybeans and fish such as salmon and mackerel.

KETOGENIC DIET

Following a high fat, low carbohydrate diet may prevent migraines. One can incorporate lean meats, eggs, seafood, butter, nuts and seeds and non-starchy veggies to their meals.

However, it is important to note that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to migraine management. “Consult a healthcare professional who can guide you through the process of identifying triggers and creating a personalised dietary plan,” Chahal suggests.