

## **Lifestyle Modifications for Migraine Headaches**

### **I. Diet: Don't skip meals!**

- A. What you don't eat may be more important in triggering a migraine headache than what you eat.**
- B. Don't skip meals – especially breakfast!**

### **II. Sleep:**

- A. You must establish a regular sleep pattern.**
  - 1. Sleeping less than 5 hours per night or more than 10 hours per night may trigger a migraine headache.**
  - 2. Get up at the same time every morning – 7 days per week. If you have the opportunity to “sleep in”, get up at your regular time, eat breakfast and then go back to bed.**
- B. You may try Melatonin (over the counter) if you have trouble sleeping or often wake up with a headache. Start with 1 milligram (mg) one hour before bedtime; you may increase the dose by 1 mg per month up to a maximum dose of 3 mg.**

### **III. Exercise:**

- A. Exercise increases endorphins which promote a feeling of well-being and interfere with our perception of pain.**
- B. Recommend walking for 20-30 minutes five to seven days per week.**

### **IV. Smoking:**

- A. Smoking can trigger migraine headaches in some individuals and may be a factor in stroke in certain patients with migraines.**
- B. Don't smoke if:**
  - 1. You are taking birth control pills and have migraines!**

**2. You have auras (visual/neurological) preceding your migraine headaches.**

**C. There are several methods available to help you stop smoking which includes: Nicotine patches, Chantix tablets, hypnosis, nicotine gum, Zyban tablets.**

**V. Stress:**

**A. Stress is a common trigger of migraine headaches.**

**1. The migraine headache will often occur after a stressful period when you should be able to relax.**

**2. Learn to say NO! Avoid taking on additional work or commitments which are not necessary.**

**3. Biofeedback training can be helpful in reducing stress related migraine headaches.**

**4. Relaxation training can be helpful in reducing stress.**