Discussing the full impact of migraine with your patients
Uncover the true impact of migraine

Migraine typically includes 3 distinct phases, which can collectively be referred to as migraine-affected days:

1. **Premonitory** (also known as pre-migraine)
2. **Migraine attack** (headache phase)
3. **Postdrome** (also known as migraine hangover)

Migraine pain usually lasts 4 to 72 hours, however, the physical limitations of migraine-affected days can impact patients for up to 7 days in just one cycle. Even though migraine is associated with disability, research has found that patients rarely initiate a discussion about the functional and debilitating consequences. Without this information, it can be difficult to assess the effect of migraine on patients and the need for adjustments to their migraine management plan.

Change the conversation

To change the dynamic of the conversation and uncover more detailed information from your patients, consider the following techniques:

**Ask open-ended questions**

Since patients rarely mention the functional and debilitating consequences of migraine unaided, it is important to lead the discussion. Start by asking questions that can help patients better communicate the effect that migraine has on their everyday lives.

**Use the “ask-tell-ask” strategy**

This medical communication strategy is based on the theory that effective education requires assessing what the patient already knows and believes and then building on or correcting that understanding.

**Ask**

Provider asks the patient a question.

**Example:** “How many migraine-affected days did you have in the past month?”

**Tell**

The patient tells the provider the requested information based on their interpretation of the question.

**Example:** “I had 10 days.”

**Ask**

The provider asks a follow-up question for clarification.

**Example:** “Does that include time before and after the migraine attack (headache phase)?”
Key questions to ask your patients

There are many questions to ask a patient with migraine. However, there are specific questions that could be asked to establish a baseline assessment of the true impact of migraine.

Primary questions that may reveal important details

- How many migraine-affected days do you experience during a typical month?
- How often are you using acute medications for your migraine?
- What is your attitude toward migraine?

Secondary questions to consider using as a follow-up

The following questions can be used to go further in a conversation or learn more about a specific topic.

Migraine-affected days

- How can you tell a migraine may be beginning?
- How long do your premonitory (also known as pre-migraine) symptoms last?
- How long do your postdrome (also known as migraine hangover) symptoms last?

Medication use

- When are you using acute medication for migraine—at the onset of symptoms/during an attack/after an attack?
- How well do acute medications relieve your symptoms?
- What interventions help improve migraine pain?

Impact on work/home/education/social life

- How has migraine impacted your work/home/education/social life?
- What kind of activities do you avoid because of migraine?

Patient perspective about migraine

- How does migraine make you feel?
- How do you feel when you don’t have a migraine?

Supporting the conversation

Patients can evaluate the impact of migraine on their lives with the Migraine Impact Tool, available at speakyouremigraine.com/migraine-test. By answering a few questions, patients will receive an overview that can be shared during their next visit.
The true impact of migraine may be underestimated.¹ To get patients on an appropriate management plan, it is important to evaluate patients based on migraine frequency, severity, and impact on their lives.⁵