



Migraine Sufferers

...in their own words

Through internet blogs, migraine sufferers now have an outlet to share the anguish, frustrations and hope of living with migraines. The following thoughts are excerpts from a New York Times blog.

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*"Our mission is to eliminate
migraine headache pain"*

Migraine headaches afflict 1 in 8 people worldwide and over 42 million people in the United States and Canada.

Because it is a disease that cannot be seen, migraine sufferers live in a world that is often misunderstood and not believed.

This debilitating disease often leaves sufferers unable to work or carry on a normal life. They live in a world of lost hope and quiet desperation and isolation and have not had an outlet to express their feeling or validate that their condition is real.

Through internet blogs, migraine sufferers now have an outlet to share the anguish, frustrations and hope of living with migraines. The following pages are excerpts from a *New York Times* blog.

Three days of living Hell: intense nausea, dizziness, sensitivity to light and sound, an inability to think and a pain that I can only illuminate as someone trying to gouge my right eye out with a searing penknife. Migraines and the like may not be fatal, but they are certainly debilitating and can waste great chunks of your life whilst you wait patiently for the attack to subside. It's unfortunate that so many people's quality of life can be impaired so severely, yet the impetus for the pharmaceutical industry to find a cure is not as pressing as other conditions that would inherently contain more status or glory. I guess we'll simply have to wait for migraines to get 'sexed up' by some media personality or other, but in the meantime, I'm going back to bed.

*Posted by Gabrielle Desailly,
NYT Blog: Arms at Rest*

Migraines.

I've had them since I was a child. Sometimes they've been so bad that I've asked a friend to help me get the window open on my 5th floor apartment, and then ask if she could leave so I could jump.

*Posted by Carly Farley
NYT Blog: Shaking it off*

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I remember hitting rock bottom when my daughter was just a few months old. I sat her in her "bouncy seat" on the bathroom floor while I knelt in the toilet vomiting and trying to play peek-a-boo so she wouldn't get scared. I thought to myself, this just can't be right, I'm a mother.

*Posted by Carol, March 6, 2009  
NYT Blog: Shaking It Off*

Migraines have almost destroyed my life. I get several a week which makes employment impossible. I haven't been able to be a decent father or husband which hurls me into a depression when I think about it. I have not been in contact with my friends for 10 years, and I only contact my siblings a couple times a year. This affliction makes one feel like a loser and causes many sufferers to consider suicide as a last resort. Don't give up! I haven't, but if I didn't have three sons, I'm not sure I'd still be on this blue planet.

*Posted by Brad Stolba  
NYT Blog:  
'Migraine' Contributors on  
National Public Radio*

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The worst part of suffering from chronic and debilitating migraines is that they are invisible to others. People think you are making it up.

While people understand pain related to disease, people don't understand and cannot relate to migraine. Thus one feels often very alone and isolated.

*Posted by Shannon Ita
NYT Blog: Arms at Rest*

My futile search for relief consumed as much of my life as enduring the pain itself, and caused me to focus on the migraine even when I wasn't having one. I can't recall a time without headaches and have accepted this condition as who I am. The funny thing about migraines is that they seem to turn my friends, family, co-workers and even total strangers into medical experts. If I had a nickel for every time someone said, "Oh, I know a great stretch/vitamin/herb/whatever for that," I could take my aching noggin to a tropical island and have a nice long nap in a beachside hut!

*Posted by Iris
NYT Blog: Arms at Rest*

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I can sympathize with people committing suicide to escape from the pain-I would not consider it, but I can understand it because it's a very isolating condition.

*Posted by CLW  
NYT Blog:  
A Lifetime of Pain and She Still Will Not Complain*

A 10+ headache is something I don't think anyone who hasn't had some type of traumatic injury or disease can understand. A sudden warning and about 30 seconds of sheer terror at the knowledge of what is about to occur before simply crumbling to the floor.

*Posted by Dave Thomason  
NYT Blog:  
A Lifetime of Pain and Still She will Not Complain*

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My past brings me sadness from a childhood I remember little of because I spent most of it in pain as a migraine sufferer-nearly one three-day episode a week. My mother was also a migraine sufferer and had to not only endure the pain, but also the humiliation of being told by patronizing doctors that it was all in her head and she should stop complaining. Migraines are a special brand of hell in terms of pain and nausea and I could only imagine how that hell might have increased had I been told it was all in my imagination.

*Posted by Tess
NYT Blog:
A Lifetime of Pain and Still She will Not Complain*

No one mentions the toll migraines take on family members. I was 14 years old when my mother started having migraines. From then until my mother died at 94, (I was nearly 70 years old) I lived in her "trap." She had been fed every drug known to mankind and seen too many MDs and hospitals to count. This is a horrible affliction, but I think the treatments are worse than the disease.

*Posted by Lois Breen
NYT Blog:
A Lifetime of Pain and Still She Will Not Complain*

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I'm a 50 year old male who, when I don't work, can keep my headaches down to a dull roar and feel very much trapped. I go to the emergency room at least twice a month and that's on top of my armada of rescue drugs and daily drug regimen. I work and live in absolute agony. My other option is not to work and become destitute. I'll lay there vomiting from the pain...yet I'm not disabled?

*Posted by Jerry Z  
NYT Blog:  
A Lifetime of Pain and Still She will Not Complain*

Some say “headaches don’t kill,” but they do. Many strokes, concussions and arterial vascular malformations are present with headaches. Chronic pain can make one suicidal-I remember a doctor once telling me that chronic pain and chronic itching are two big causes of suicidal depression. Headaches can kill by the simple blinding distraction and exhaustion they cause. It’s hard NOT to step in front of a bus when you’re in excruciating constant pain.

*Posted by Jane  
NYT Blog:  
A Lifetime of Pain and Still She will Not Complain*

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To see my physically strong, blue collar, hardworking husband who rarely misses work, curled up in a ball in painful agony of a migraine, helped me realize the seriousness of this devastating condition.

*Posted by Ocotillo
NYT Blog:
A Lifetime of Pain and Still She will Not Complain*

When I was diagnosed with migraines, I just started crying because somebody had finally validated the pain I was having was real. Before, people would just tell me, "It's all in your head you know. You don't look like you have a headache."

*Posted by Rachel
NYT Blog:
A Lifetime of Pain and Still She will Not Complain*

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I feel that my life is ruled by migraines. I fear meeting men to date or even new friends because they'll have to deal with the "sicky" all the time. People who don't have migraines have NO CLUE what we go through. It is hard to explain, and hard to get people to accept and believe you're not just blowing them off. It is hard to make plans because if I get excited about something I will usually end up getting sick. If I don't get enough sleep, I usually get sick. If I'm in the sun too long, I usually get sick...and on and on and on...

*Posted by MZ  
NYT Blog: Beyond Kittens, Beyond Angels*

I suffer from something called NDPH-New Daily Persistent Headache, meaning the pain, which is at an 8 or 9 out of 10, NEVER stops. I wake up with it and go to bed with it, every single minute of every day of my life. Triptans, anti-inflammatory drugs, narcotics, steroids, magnesium injections, anti-seizure medications, nerve blocks, Botox injections, Neurologists, Hermatology, ER visits, ENT doctors, Pain management specialists, Dentists, Acupuncture, Endocrinologists, Cardiologists, Opthamologists, Massage Therapists, Chiropractors, scan, blood work; you name it, I've tried it. I think the dismissive nature of the doctors involved is the worst. They have given up, which makes me give up. Now that severe depression has set in, I just wait – I don't eat...I don't sleep. I hope that every sufferer who is able to enjoy a minute, an hour or a day without head pain can better appreciate the gift they have been given.

*Posted by L  
NYT Blog: Beyond Kittens, Beyond Angels*

Unfortunately, many of us men don't discuss the migraine condition, for fear, I believe, of not being considered a real man or tough enough. As a male migraine sufferer, this is a stigma that I had to learn to live with for awhile and finally overcome.

*Posted by Ted  
NYT Blog: Beyond Kittens, Beyond Angels*

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I have migraines every day and if I don't control my headache it will turn into a week-long episode of nausea, blurred vision, vomiting, and the most horrible sharp throbbing pains on the right side of my temple. The pain is so severe, I can feel it pulsing from the right eye to the back of the neck, down my spine as if a lightning bolt had continuous shocks through my body until I eventually just become numb. On top of it all, medications are so difficult for me. I have such horrible reactions to all migraine medications and then become sicker from the medicine than from the actual migraine.

*Posted by Amy D.
NYT Blog: Beyond Kittens, Beyond Angels*

I had a 12 hour vomiting sessions, throwing up as many as 23 times during one migraine. My pain killers don't work well enough to keep using them; they just cloud the pain and the migraine grows beneath it, ready to hit me even harder when the drugs wear off. But sometimes there's nothing I can do but keep fighting my migraines with drugs. I want to live my life.

*Posted by JC Boyle
NYT Blog: Shaking It Off*

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I am a chronic headache sufferer and have probably been depressed for a long, long time. My sister's life has essentially been governed by her migraines for the past thirty years. She has chosen a wild combination of drugs that have enabled her to basically become a passive participant in her own life and I have witnessed both of us taking divergent paths in an effort to seek ANY remedy that would alleviate the horrible nightmare of a migraine/depression bomb.

*Posted by Slurptasti  
NYT Blog: Shacking It Off*

For years I was told to  
"Pretend that my head didn't hurt." The pain of  
a migraine is debilitating enough without being  
equally matched with the frustration of  
practically being blamed for your own pain.  
Family, friends and employers often become  
less than sympathetic because there is no  
gaping wound and the pain is beyond any they  
can identify with unless they have experienced  
a migraine first-hand.

*Posted by Rosemary Monroe  
NYT Blog: A lifetime of pain and still she will not complain*

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Migraines have been with me since childhood.
When they come, there is no solution for me
except a dark room and absolute stillness. I
become unable to remember simple words and
experience huge anxiety – usually focused on
my fear of what will happen if I cannot get rid
of the headache.

*Posted by Kamal
NYT Blog: Beyond Kittens, Beyond Angels*