



Your physician believes your headaches are migraines. This brochure will help you understand migraine. How to become an active participant in your care program is also important to gain control over your headaches. Migraine is a condition that reflects the way your nervous system functions or, at times, mal-functions. Learning about your migrainous nervous system gives you insight about your migraines. Ultimately, you will find ways to

lessen the number of headaches. Even though migraine is not curable, it is manageable. Most who suffer from migraine can look forward to a future of better migraine control.

“Migraine attacks are completely unpredictable. I never know when one will hit.”

Your physician has a special interest in headache care and is a member of the Headache Network for Primary Care. Besides having received extra medical training in headache care, physicians in this network share ideas on successful treatment strategies. These physicians believe that migraine is a genetic condition. In other words, it is inherited; most people with migraine have at least one blood relative with this disorder. Migraine results when the normal balance of chemicals in the brain is disrupted. It is not a “stress disease.”

If you experience migraine then you are a migraineur. Being a migraineur means that you were born with a nervous system that is

more sensitive and more easily excited than those without migraine. This sensitivity is part of who you are, between attacks as well as during attacks of migraine. Understanding migraine is really gaining a new appreciation of yourself.

Besides suffering from severe headaches, migraineurs often share other characteristics, such as being light sleepers and skipping breakfast. They are affected by environmental changes, such as, weather, odors, and bright lights. Generally, migraineurs are conscientious, organized, achievement-oriented and creative. Vigilant of their surroundings, they may sense the feelings and needs of others.

“Am I just trying to get out of doing things?”

Prehistorically, there were advantages to a nervous system that is easily alerted, especially in terms of avoiding danger and finding food. Evolution selected the migrainous nervous system as adaptable to the rigorous demands of the environment. Today, migraine affects about 15% of the general population. Migraine is one of the most common reasons people seek medical attention.

What is Migraine?

Today's fast-paced lifestyle demands much from our nervous system. For many it seems we are in a constant state of alert. The nervous system is adjusting to the lights, sounds, and activities of our environment. It adapts to weather, wind and humidity. It constantly accommodates changes in hormones, emotions, and thoughts as well as the many chemicals in our food and beverages. Considering this, is it any wonder that at times, the nervous system overloads? And when it does, there is a change in brain chemicals, rendering the brain unable to slow down. Eventually, the brain loses the ability to inhibit sensory