



Health & Wellness

Attention DuPage Moms:

Do Migraines Prevent You From Taking Care of Your Kids?

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Migraine is a common, disabling, chronic neurological condition that affects approximately 30 million Americans, primarily women. Approximately one in five women may be affected, and one in four households may have a migraine sufferer. Although migraine is not exclusively a woman's disease, it can have

a profound impact on women sufferers. Unfortunately, the impact of migraine is greatest during the woman's reproductive years, the most productive years where family and professional demands peak.

Why women and Moms?

It was found that the incidence of migraine is equal between males and females before the onset of menstruation; and after puberty the rate for females triples compared to males. Menstruation is one cause of hormonal changes over the course of a woman's life. Other causes of hormonal changes include pregnancy and menopause. Today, women's role in society is different and more stressful because they wear many different hats. Most women carry the title of wife and mother, cook, laundress, housekeeper, household secretary as well as working outside the home.

How Disabling is the Migraine?

Most migraine attacks last most of the day with 49% of patients reporting 5-24 hour attacks and 12% reporting longer than 24 hour attacks, some lasting up to 72 hours. Migraine frequency may vary between migraine sufferers, with 75% of migraine sufferers reporting three or less attacks per month, and 25% of migraine sufferers reporting more than four attacks per month.

Most migraine sufferers rate their head pain and the associated symptoms such as light and sound sensitivity as severe. Symptoms of migraine include some or all of the following:

- moderate to severe head pain,
- sensitivity to light, sound or smell,
- nausea,
- vomiting,
- lack of concentration,
- scalp tenderness,
- worsening of symptoms with bending over or going up the stairs or doing very simple household activities or job requirements.

Often, the only relief for the untreated migraine sufferer is to be a prisoner in a quiet dark room, disabled and not able to participate in normal life. Some migraine sufferers may be more disabled due to the associated symptoms rather than the headache itself. Considering the severity of head pain and its associated symptoms, duration, and frequency, migraine can be very debilitating and may significantly interfere with household work, social and family activities, and work productivity.

Migraines may significantly compromise and impair the ability to perform even very basic chores. How can a migraine sufferer even think about juggling a career, home and family when she is debilitated with migraines?

The impact on children of women who are untreated for migraine and its associated symptoms could be very significant and serious. If mom is laying in a dark quiet room, disabled by her migraine symptoms, she is not able to meet the basic physical and emotional needs of her kids including and not limited to feeding, cleaning, helping with homework

and taking them to activities. Added to this, mom may not be able to be physically available to her children because of noise and light sensitivity.

Add to this, the poor kids being deprived of their own childhood - obligated to keep quiet because of mom's headache. The end result could be emotionally deprived and abandoned children, who may be wandering in the house with no one to take care for their basic needs.

Although this is the typical scenario during migraine attacks, the scenario can replay itself outside the attacks as well. The migraine sufferer has to do extra work to catch up with household, paper, and work responsibilities that she was not able to do during migraine attacks.

Another issue is that migraine sufferers must rely on others including spouse and children to do what they cannot. This in turn, causes stress in the relationships within the family, and adds to the suffering and misery of the spouse and kids.

As noted above, the impact of migraine on the family and children's lives can be very serious. It could impair and compromise the family wellbeing. Fortunately, there are a variety of treatment options available that may control migraine headaches. If you are a mom, who has been suffering from migraine headaches, seek medical assistance to conquer your migraine. Get out of the dark room and love and care for your adored children again! There is no reason why you can't enjoy a healthy relationship with your spouse and kids!

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