

## What is migraine?

Migraine is a complex neurological disease that causes recurrent attacks of head pain and accompanying symptoms, such as sensory hypersensitivity and gastro-intestinal disturbances. There is no cure for migraine; it is a permanent and debilitating condition.



Migraine is not “just a headache.”

## Why should you care?

Migraine affects approximately 15% of Canadians and is the second leading cause of disability in the world. It affects people of all ages, genders, and races worldwide, and impacts every aspect of an individual's life, including their ability to work.



You have employees & colleagues who live with migraine.

## Impact of migraine at work

### Employment

Migraine Canada's Quality of Life survey of 1,144 Canadians revealed migraine impacted career choice (22%), job retention (25%), job searches (11%), and educational journey (20%).

### Absenteeism

Migraine is among the top five chronic diseases causing missed workdays. In Canada, approximately 7 million workdays are lost annually due to migraine alone.

### Presenteeism

Individuals with migraine often push themselves to work despite experiencing symptoms, leading to concentration challenges, fatigue, and reduced productivity.

### Productivity Loss


Migraine ranks as the third leading cause of productivity loss among working-age individuals, costing employers and the state approximately \$980 million per year. Presenteeism costs, though challenging to measure reliably, are estimated to constitute up to 80% of migraine's total cost.




Employees with migraines often face stigma and hesitate to disclose their condition or request accommodations, affecting productivity. Educating managers and employees and promoting openness can reduce judgment and improve well-being and performance.

## What can you do?

**1. Understand and reduce triggers:** Creating a suitable working environment can decrease the frequency and intensity of migraine attacks.

 **Triggers include:** Bright or flickering lighting, strong odours (i.e., perfume, food, cleaning products), excessive or repetitive noises, computer screen glare, and rigid schedules or deadlines.

**2. Provide accommodations:** Adjustable lighting or fluorescent light covers, scent-free policies, sensory-friendly rooms, anti-glare screen filters, regular breaks, and flexible scheduling.

 Each person living with migraine experiences unique triggers and symptoms. Trusting the employee and their healthcare provider's advice is crucial for developing workplace accommodations.

**3. Treatment coverage:** Ensure migraine treatments are included in employee benefit plans to enhance productivity and workplace retention



The better you understand migraine, the more effectively you can support your employees and coworkers.

## Facts & Statistics



Experts estimate that approximately 15% of Canadians (5 million) are affected by migraine. Of the general population, 1-2% live with chronic migraine (14 or more migraine attacks each month).

One in four households has someone affected by migraine.



Migraine is three times more common in women than in men, affecting approximately 30% of women over their lifetime. On average, women living with migraine miss 21 to 36 days of work per year, depending on the frequency of their attacks.



Over 1 billion people worldwide are affected by migraine. The World Health Organization reports that migraine is the third most common disease in the world and the second most disabling.

Migraine causes significant disruptions in all aspects of life, including employment, education, mental health, sleep, social activities, family life, and relationships. Migraine Canada's Quality of Life survey revealed that 91% of people living with migraine feel a lack of control over their lives due to the condition.



Migraine costs the Canadian economy billions of dollars every year. These economic costs include direct expenses (physician visits, physiotherapy, medications, etc.) and indirect costs (missed workdays, reduced productivity at work, disability payments, etc.). Migraine Canada's Quality of Life survey revealed that half of migraine patients worry about their family's financial stability.

Of the 1,144 Canadians surveyed in the Quality of Life survey, less than one-third (32%) reported asking for workplace accommodations. More than half of these requests were either accepted only with a medical letter or not accepted at all.

