



Topic

Nondrug Migraine Treatments That Work

Title & Organization

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Speaker

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Many complementary and integrative treatments (CIM) are safe, effective, and can be combined with traditional medical therapies.
- Behavioral treatments that can be helpful include breathing exercises, guided meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, biofeedback, and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).
- Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) has been shown to help reduce disability.
- Neuromodulation devices can stop migraine attacks after they start, can reduce migraine frequency, and they have few side effects.
- Neuromodulation devices can be used by those who can't take medications, pregnant women, and adolescents.
- Acupuncture requires 8-10 sessions before you might see benefits.
- Acupressure might be effective during an attack for some people.
- Other CIM treatments that are shown to be effective include: yoga, physical therapy, acupuncture, and green light therapy.

QUOTES

“Sometimes someone might be on a pill form of treatment and they're getting better, but not all the way. And in my mind I think, ‘Well, I could add more pills, but there's already a burden there that the person is carrying. Why not think about nonmedication options like a device, or behavioral treatments, or a vitamin supplement to see if we can move towards migraine freedom?’”

“That's the great thing of CIM: A lot of these techniques can be added together — they're not harmful — and you can build your toolkit to include some of these things and say, ‘I'm going to create my migraine [kit] to really help attack the attack and take some control back.’”

“I often will hesitate then to mention CIM treatments because these can have a high burden of cost to the patient. So if this is something you're interested in, I suggest that you proactively bring it up in the consultation.”

TREATMENTS CITED

Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT)	Guided breathing
Acupressure	Guided meditation
Acupuncture	Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR)
Biobehavioral therapy	Neuromodulation devices
Biofeedback	Occupational therapy
Craniosacral therapy (CST)	Physical therapy
Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)	Progressive muscle relaxation
Green light therapy (Allay Lamp)	Relaxation therapy
	Spinal therapy

PRACTICAL STEPS

- Visit clinicaltrials.gov to learn about all U.S. clinical trials. It is a great resource to search for details on both active and recruiting studies. Search: “migraine behavioral trials,” for example.
- Consider one of the many apps (like Calm and Headspace) to help with guided breathing, meditation, and relaxation techniques.
- There are many treatment options out there. Try things out one at a time, so you can see what works without getting overwhelmed.
- CIM treatments can often be added to your existing migraine treatment plan. Discuss your options with your healthcare provider.