

## Ocular Migraines

Ocular migraines are also referred to as ophthalmic migraines. Ocular Migraines are visual disturbances most commonly noted in the peripheral vision.

### What are the symptoms?

Visual symptoms (usually in both eyes but often to one side) can consist of the following:

- a spot of blurring that expands to one side over 10-30 minutes;
- an expanding border often described as zig-zag lines, shimmering or resembling heat waves or sparklers;
- vision loss in one eye only, involving the entire field or only the upper or lower section.

Rare symptoms include double vision, change in lid position (lid droop), or change in pupil size (both smaller and larger).

### What are the causes?

While it is not clear exactly how a migraine works, it is believed that the basic cause of migraine is an abnormality in the neurotransmitter serotonin, an important chemical used by your brain cells. During a migraine attack, changes in serotonin affect blood vessels in your brain (and blood vessels to your eye), often causing the vessels to constrict. The ocular migraine can occur either in conjunction with the classic migraine or without the corresponding headache.

### Is there anything I can do to prevent ocular migraines?

A person can lower the risk for migraines by identifying and avoiding trigger factors which induce the onset of symptoms. The common trigger factors are:

#### 1. Certain foods:

Caffeine (coffee, colas, chocolate), citrus fruits, MSG

alcohol, nitrate and nitrites (in cured meats), aged cheese

#### 2. Stress/fatigue: This can be physical (heat/cold) or emotional.

#### 3. Hormonal changes: puberty, pregnancy, menopause, birth control pills

4. Trauma and head injury

5. Bright light

6. Loud noises

### **What is the treatment?**

In general, there are no serious complications caused by ocular migraine. Usually, ocular migraines do not need treatment unless associated with more severe classic or common migraines symptoms.

### **Migraine Headaches**

Migraine is a common neurological condition occurring in at least 15-20% of the population and in up to 50% of women. Classic migraine usually starts with visual symptoms (often zig-zag lines, colored lights or flashes of light expanding to one side of your vision over 15-60 minutes), followed by a single sided pounding severe headache. The headache is usually associated with nausea, vomiting, and light sensitivity. Sometimes visual symptoms and even neurologic dysfunction may occur without the headache. This is called migraine variant.

Common migraine may cause only a headache felt on both sides of the head. This form of migraine may be responsible for the headaches that many people may have attributed to tension, stress, or sinus pain.