

Facts & Statistics

Migraine Prevalence

- Experts estimate that **12% of Canadians (4.5 million)**.
 - Of the general population 1-2% live with chronic migraine (14 or more migraine attacks each month).
- **1 in 4 households has someone affected by migraine.**
- **Migraine affects people of all ages, genders, and races worldwide.**
 - Migraine is 3x more common in women than men.
 - Migraine affects approximately 30% of women over a lifetime.
 - Approximately 10% of children experience migraine.
 - Approximately 8% of men experience migraine.
- **Over 1 billion people worldwide are affected by migraine.**
- **The World Health Organization reports migraine is the third most common disease in the world and the second most disabling.**

Impact

- Living with migraine can be onerous and significantly impact quality of life. **For many, migraine attacks are painful and debilitating**, leaving those experiencing an attack no choice but to retreat to a dark room alone.
- Migraine often causes **major disruption in all aspects of life** including employment, careers, mental health, education, social activities and relationships costing the Canadian economy billions of dollars every year.
- **Economic costs include both direct costs** (physician visits, physiotherapy, medications, etc.) **and indirect costs** (missed workdays, reduced productivity while at work, disability payments, etc.).
- Migraine is **responsible for significant lost work days each year in Canada**. This does not include the economic costs of presenteeism (when employees are at work but not functioning or performing at full capacity).
- **There is no cure.**

Why Disease Language Matters?

Language plays a vital role in how we understand the world. When talking about health, the language we use can give the impression that people did something to deserve being sick, or that it is their fault, when this is not true. Language can unintentionally be disparaging and belittling to people, labeling them as helpless or as victims of their medical conditions. In the case of migraine, the language we use can reinforce the misunderstanding that migraine is just a headache. By choosing language that reinforces these misconceptions, makes people with the health conditions vulnerable to being stigmatized.

Stigma in a medical setting, or the workplace, can result in people not receiving the care they need or being financially disadvantaged through reduced opportunity for promotion, cause for demotion or, in some instances, loss of employment altogether.

Creating a language guide promotes consistent and candid communication about migraine and headache diseases in an accurate and respectful way. It is our hope a Canadian guide will lead to improved knowledge within society and empathy towards those living with migraine. The impact of migraine and other headache disorders is real, and deserves to be taken seriously.

Language recommendations »

Preferred

- People/person living with migraine
- People affected by migraine
- Person with migraine disease
- Migraine
- Migraine disorder/disease
- Headache disease
- Headache disorder
- Symptom free
- Break in migraine attacks
- Stop in migraine attacks
- Experience(s) the pain and disability of migraine disease
- Lives with migraine
- Prodrome, aura, postdrome, photophobia, sonophobia, inter-ictal a symptoms
- Migraine with aura
- Migraine with visual aura
- Migraine attack(s)
- Cluster attack(s)

Acceptable

- People/women/men with migraine
- Person/ woman/man with migraine
- Patient living with migraine disease
- Migraine patient
- Having migraine disease/having migraine
- Living with Migraine
- Remission
- Medication Overuse Headache* (MOH)
- Rebound headaches
- Migraine episode(s)
- Headache day
- Migraine day
- Cluster day

**Still scientifically appropriate but carries undue stigma. Check out our detailed language guide at www.migrainecanada.org/language*

Try to avoid

- People suffering from migraine
- Migraine sufferer(s)
- Migraineur(s)
- Person suffers from migraine
- Suffering from migraine
- Migraine personality
- Migraine person
- Migraines
- Migraine headache
- Headache(s)
- Cured of migraine
- Migraine miracle
- Silent migraine
- Ophthalmic migraine
- Cluster migraines

About Migraine Canada

Migraine Canada is a federally registered charity supporting all Canadians afflicted by migraine and other headache conditions. We achieve this through programs and campaigns to raise awareness, educate, support and advocate for improved health outcomes.

Visit www.migrainecanada.org to view the detailed guide and fully understand why language matters.