

Back-to-School Checklist for Primary School-Age Children (3-12 years of age)

Summer vacation is ending, and it's time to prepare for the next school year. For children with migraine, this can be challenging. What can you do to set your child up for a successful school year? This checklist provides key actions to prepare your child and school staff. Plan in advance! These checklist items are completed in the weeks BEFORE school begins.

*If your child is starting at a **new school**, please see below for further suggestions on a meeting to take place in June before the school year starts.

NOTE: Migraine protocol needs to be adhered to by both the student AND the teacher/staff. The importance of taking preventative steps immediately to prevent a full-blown migraine needs to be understood by school staff

Early summer (June/ early July):



- Schedule an appointment with your child's healthcare provider for mid-summer. This appointment will be to review the treatment plan, refill your child's prescription, and get any forms signed.
- Schedule a meeting with the school principal, new teacher and office staff either the week before school starts or the first week of school. Most staff are back in the school the week before to prepare.

Mid-Summer (early-mid August):

- Attend the doctor's appointment
 - Write down any changes in your child's migraine attacks including response to medications, new symptoms and changes in frequency/intensity, etc.
 - Have your Medical Note form signed (Form templates are here: <https://migrainecanada.org/pediatrics-adolescents/>) and any other required paperwork
- Refill medications. Keep them in the original labelled bottle with instructions that match what the doctor has provided on the medical form.





- Begin discussing a Headache Plan with your child:
 - Practice how to talk about his/her migraine
 - Discuss preventative actions, such as the importance of keeping their water bottle filled so they can be hydrated throughout the day
 - Review what they need to do if a migraine happens at school (i.e. tell the teacher right away).
- Ease into the school routine (ie. sleep/wake schedule, nutrition, etc).
- Talk with your child about anything he/she is nervous or scared about. It could also be helpful to get together with some kids at the school to help with anxiety.

- Build a **Migraine Emergency Kit** of items most helpful for your child's particular migraine experience. For example:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> water bottle | <input type="checkbox"/> blanket |
| <input type="checkbox"/> electrolyte tablets or drink | <input type="checkbox"/> eye mask |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bucket to throw up in | <input type="checkbox"/> sunglasses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> rescue medications (in the original labelled bottle) | <input type="checkbox"/> ear plugs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gravol | <input type="checkbox"/> hoodie to cover his/her head |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> ice pack |

One Week before school starts:

- Meet with the school (principal, teacher and office staff) to discuss your child's disorder, the treatment plan and accommodations. At the meeting:
 - Provide a fact sheet on migraine and all required forms from the doctor's office.
 - Confirm everyone is familiar with the agreed protocol (i.e. the importance of prompt preventative measures at the first sign of migraine to help prevent a full-blown attack). It is never appropriate to ignore or diminish migraine symptoms.
 - Bring a list of symptoms your child regularly experiences before and during an attack.
 - Confirm a visual sign that your child can use to signal to the teacher that they need to leave the classroom due to nausea. Oral approval to leave the classroom should not be required.





- Discuss any changes (i.e. new classroom, portables, etc.) with your child. This can help to reduce anxiety and fears.
- Ensure your child knows the closest washrooms to his/her classroom(s).
- Bring the Migraine Emergency Kit with you (or a list of the kit's contents). Decide who accesses the kit and how it is retrieved.

- Continue practicing the school routine
- Continue to review the Headache Plan and reassure your child that all is in place for a successful school year.
- If your child takes a bus, make arrangements to speak with the bus driver to confirm any preferred seat locations (i.e. near the front or away from the heater)
- Plan a snack and lunch menu. Discuss with your child the order the food should be eaten, how often, and what liquids they should drink.
 - If the school provides lunch, familiarize yourself with the process and menu options.

Additional actions if starting a new school:



- Meet with the new school sooner! Ideally June (before the previous school year ends) to discuss your child's migraine and the accommodations provided at their previous school. At the meeting:
 - Provide a fact sheet on pediatric migraine.
 - Agree on school accommodations for your child and medication administration.
- If you have any concerns with the accommodations that will be provided, escalate your issues to the School Board over the summer

Appropriate accommodations to request to ensure a successful school year:



- Deadlines flexibility, extended periods of time for tests, and a quiet space during the school day to rest.
- If a student misses school, they are supported to help catch up at their own pace.
- Parents can consider a tutor to help their child keep up if necessary.
- If school gatherings (like an assembly) are too much stimulation, the student should be allowed to go to a quiet area and read a book or do homework.
- If participating in physical fitness isn't possible, alternative assignments are provided. (ie. research, write a short essay or story, etc).
- Speak openly with the teacher about strategies for getting homework done (in terms of when they are less likely to have a migraine)

Migraine Canada is committed to improving the lives of those living with migraine. This checklist is intended as general recommendations only and does not replace advice from your healthcare provider.