

EMPLOYER DISCUSSION GUIDE



Remember you are not alone. 34% of people with migraines reported limitations in job opportunities, 36% reported missing at least one day of work in the past 3 months due to migraines, and 18% who had previously been employed reported that they changed their work activities (hours, type of work or stopped work) for at least 3 months because of their migraines.

WHAT DO I TELL MY EMPLOYER?

Your employer may be open to working with you to understand your condition and help minimize your migraines at work. But in order to do so they need to know what is going on and how it impacts you in order to help provide support and understanding.

Your employer may want to know that you and your doctor have or are working on a proactive management plan to help reduce your migraines attacks and severity. Providing a note from a physician may help you feel more confident in explaining your condition and asking for some accommodations.

You and your employer may also discuss the potential triggers of your migraines to see if there are any accommodations that could be made at work to help minimize these triggers. Keeping a migraine diary may help you identify and review the potential triggers with your employer.

Potential accommodations in the workplace may include things like:

- using an anti-glare screen with your computer
- adjusting the lighting in your workspace
- creating a fragrant-free environment
- having access to a dark room, a place where you can go in the event of a migraine at work to take your medication and wait for it to start working



TIP: You may find it useful to document your discussion and accommodations, so take notes during your discussion.

TALKING TO YOUR EMPLOYER

Starting the conversation can be difficult. Remember that it is in your employer's best interest to work with you, find ways to help manage your migraines and remain as productive as possible.

HERE IS A CHECKLIST OF THINGS TO DISCUSS DURING YOUR CONVERSATION:

- Explain that you suffer from migraines and that they are more than just a headache – they are a neurological condition. A condition that impacts 2.7 million Canadians.
- Discuss how migraines are different from just a bad headache.

Migraines may also include:

- pain on one side of the head, although may occur in both
- pulsating, throbbing pain
- pain that is made worse by physical activity
- includes other symptoms like nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light, sound and odours, visual and other neurological dysfunctions (i.e. seeing zig zagging lights) before or during an attack

- Provide a note from your physician so that they know you are actively taking steps to help minimize their impact.
- Discuss how your migraines impact you and your ability to work productively.
- Discuss your key triggers and ways to help minimize them.
- A list of potential accommodations that you would like to suggest to help reduce potential triggers.

Remember you can garner comprehension and support through deeper understanding of migraines, their triggers and impact.