

Another Sinus Headache This Winter?...Not So Fast!

(NAPSA)—Your nose is stuffed up, pressure is building in your face, and you have a pounding headache. Your mother calls and you tell her you have another sinus headache. But do you?

Each year, millions of people report having a sinus headache. While a person may be experiencing symptoms like those of sinusitis and also have a headache, it does not necessarily mean they have a sinus headache.

“The fact is, sinus headache is an uncommon occurrence that affects a small percentage of people,” says Curtis Schreiber, MD, a headache specialist. “The confusion comes from prematurely assigning symptoms like congestion and facial pain to sinusitis instead of considering the other medical conditions that can produce the same or similar symptoms.”

If not a sinus headache, then what?

“Many of these patients are actually experiencing a migraine headache, which can produce sinus-associated symptoms such as nasal congestion,” confirms Dr. Schreiber. “Since people tend to know very little about migraine, they are unaware of its similarities to sinusitis.”

Migraine is a real medical condition that can be treated with appropriate medicines. Symptoms of migraine vary by person, and one migraine may exhibit different symptoms from another. Migraines include some of the following symptoms:

- Pain on one side of your head
- Moderate to severe pain
- Throbbing pain
- Worse pain when you move or bend over
- Nausea or vomiting
- Sensitivity to light and sound
- Aura (flashing lights, visual disturbance)

Migraines don't always include such classic symptoms as auras. According to the American Migraine II Study, only about 24 percent of people previously undiag-

Steps You Can Take

- Educate yourself about migraines
- Go to headachequiz.com and take the migraine quiz
- Keep a headache diary. Be sure to describe how your symptoms are affecting your daily routine, and which activities tend to trigger the symptoms
- Visit a doctor specifically about your headaches
- Ask about what treatment is right for you, and for detailed instructions on how to take the medicine
- Follow up with your physician regularly, to let him or her know how you are doing

Adapted from migrainehelp.com



nosed with migraine experience aura.

In addition to the symptoms listed above, migraines can also have symptoms that overlap with other kinds of headaches. Migraines are sometimes mistaken for “sinus headaches” because:

- Migraine pain can be felt on the face, around the eyes or in the sinuses
- Migraine symptoms can include stuffy or runny nose and watery eyes
- Migraines can be triggered by weather changes and “allergies”

A study recently published in the medical journal *Archives of Internal Medicine* highlighted this confusion. In this study, almost 3,000 patients with a history of self-described or physician-diagnosed “sinus headache” and no previous diagnosis of migraine were evaluated to determine if they met criteria for migraine. Not surprising to Dr. Schreiber, 80 percent of these patients were diagnosed as having migraine. The research findings also showed that the most common sinus-area symptoms reported by these patients were sinus pressure (84 percent), sinus pain (82 percent), and nasal congestion (63 percent).

What can you do?

If you suffer from frequent

bad headaches, you may be suffering from migraines. In the Landmark Study of over 1,200 patients, published in the medical journal *Headache*, nine out of ten patients who visited a physician about their headaches were found to have migraine or probable migraine.

Make a pledge to yourself during Migraine Awareness Month this January: schedule an appointment with your doctor to get the right diagnosis and treatment. To help you keep this resolution, take a simple quiz at headachequiz.com, and bring the results to your physician for discussion.

If your doctor diagnoses your headaches as migraines, he or she may prescribe a migraine-specific medicine, called a triptan, to help alleviate your symptoms. Imitrex® (sumatriptan succinate) Tablets, the first and most widely prescribed triptan in the U.S., is one example. Remember, only your physician can accurately diagnosis your symptoms and work with you to develop a treatment plan that is right for you.

Imitrex should only be used where a clear diagnosis of migraine has been established. It is not for use in patients with sinus symptoms in the absence of a diagnosis of migraine. Patients should not take Imitrex if they have certain types of heart disease, history of stroke or TIAs, peripheral vascular disease, Raynaud syndrome, or blood pressure that is uncontrolled. Patients with risk factors for heart disease, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes or are a smoker, should be evaluated by a doctor before taking Imitrex. Very rarely, certain people, even some without heart disease, have had serious heart related problems. Patients who are pregnant, nursing, or taking medications should talk to their doctor. Please see full prescribing information available at www.Imitrex.com