





Migraine vs. Tension-Type Headaches: How to Tell the Difference



Is it a migraine or a tension-type headache?
Here's how to tell these two common problems apart.

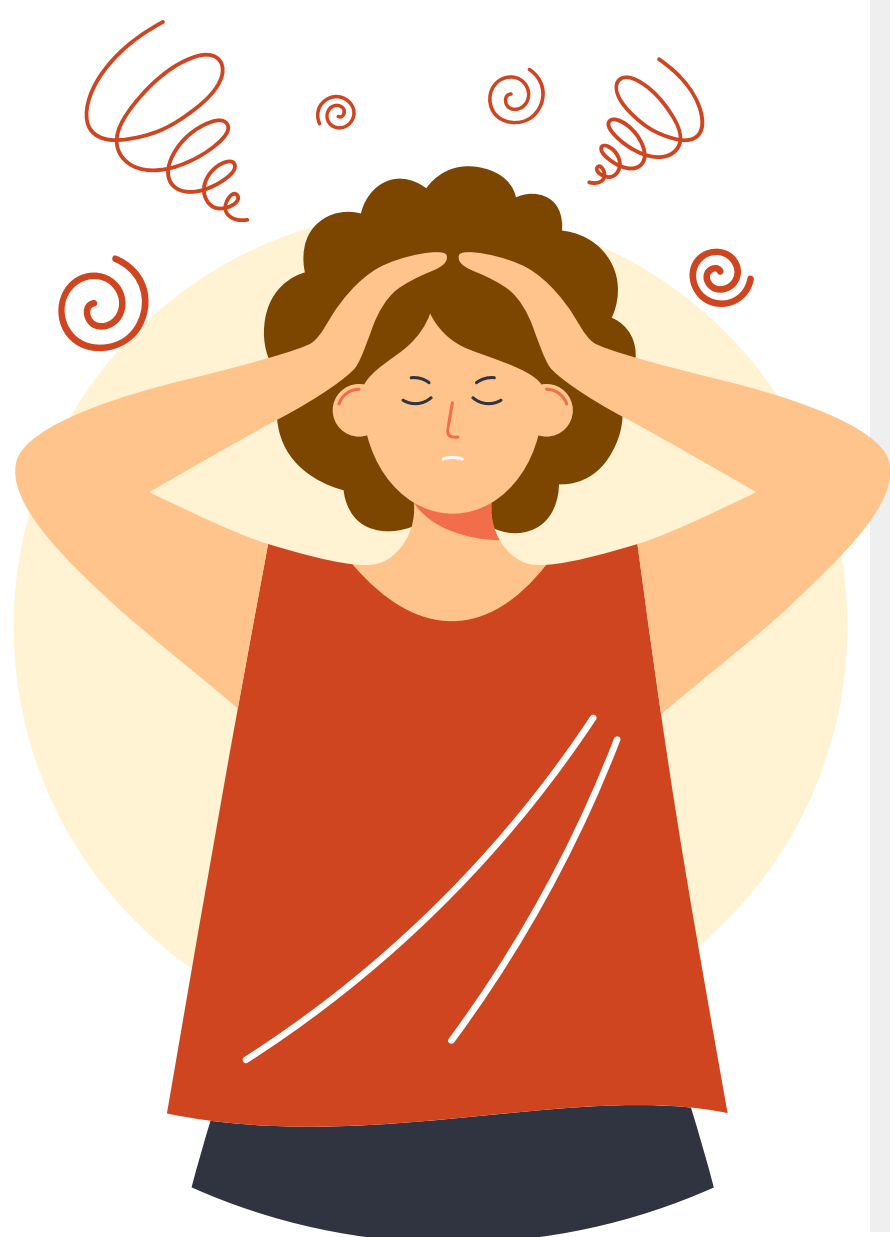
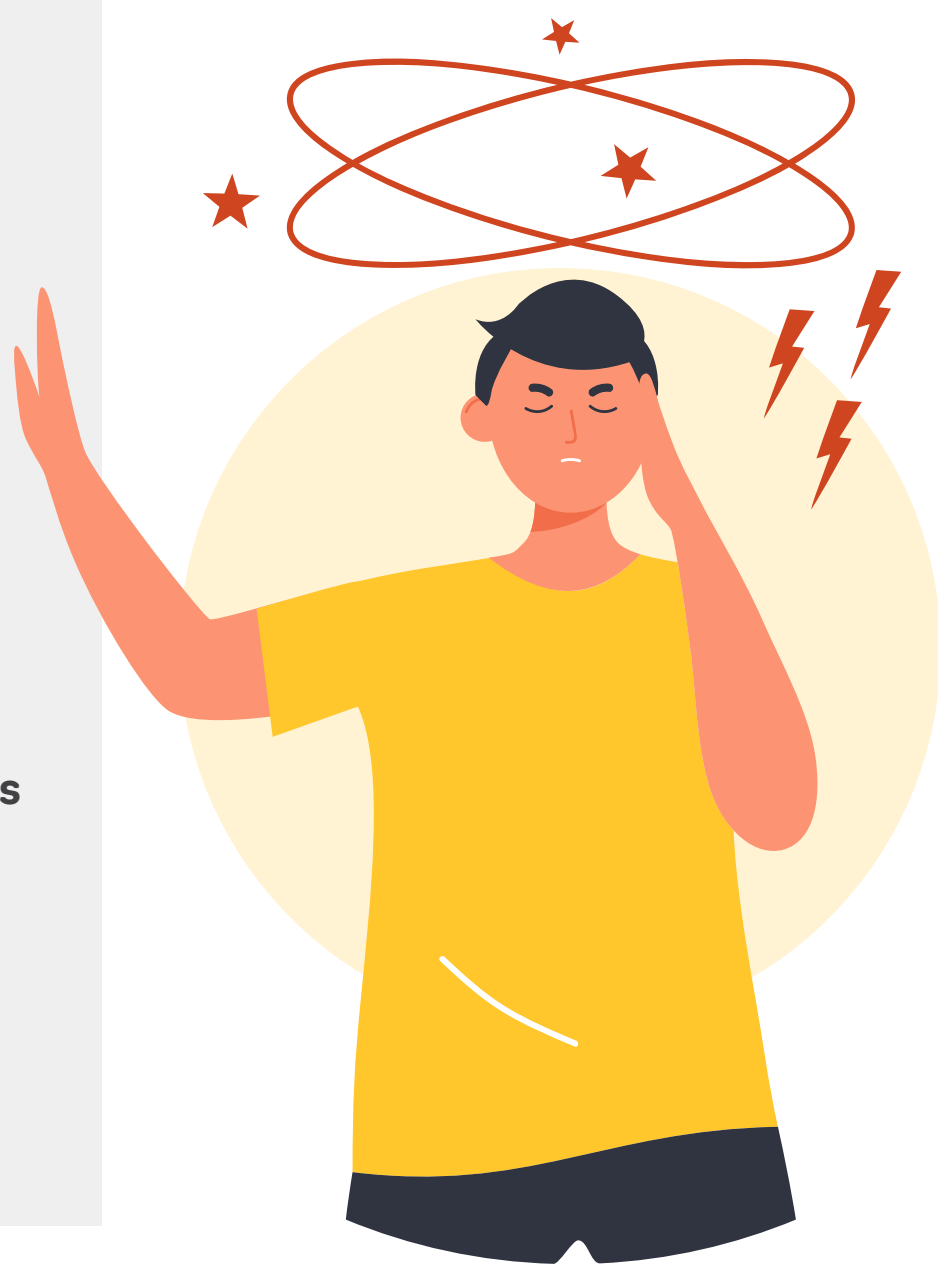
Migraine

A migraine typically includes at least two of these symptoms:

-  - Pain on one side of the head
-  - Throbbing pain
-  - Moderate to severe pain
-  - Sensitivity to light and sound and/or nausea or vomiting





A migraine typically lasts **four to 72 hours** and **worsens with activity**.

Some people who have migraines also experience auras. Often described as a warning sign, an aura can include **seeing flashing lights, having trouble speaking or feeling a tingling sensation**.



Tension-Type Headache

Characteristics of a tension-type headache include at least two of these:

-  - Pain on both sides of the head
-  - Pressure-like pain
-  - Mild to moderate pain
-  - Sensitivity to light or sound (or neither)

A tension-type headache can last **30 minutes to 7 days** and **does not worsen with activity**.

People who get tension-type headaches **do not experience auras**.

Heady Statistics

40%

Headaches affect 40% of the global population.*

2x

Around the world, **women are more than twice as likely** to experience migraines than men.**

\$56 billion

Migraines cost the U.S. more than \$56 billion yearly (medications, office visits, treatment, etc.).**

Sources: *World Health Organization, **National Institutes of Health



If you experience an extremely painful migraine or a headache after a head injury, call 911. It could be a medical emergency.

Are you concerned about headache pain?
Find a provider: weillcornell.org/doctors