

## Ask the Expert

# Migraine Advice

Clinical Research Institute

**W**HEN MARY GOT A DEBILITATING HEADACHE, she was unable to do much of anything but lie in a dark room with an ice pack on her throbbing head. She had to call in sick to work, cancel plans with friends or family, and accept that her “new normal” included spontaneous recurring head pain.

Trips to the doctor—in a desperate attempt to find pain relief—resulted in diagnoses ranging from anxiety to tension headache to sinus infection.

It wasn't until she was accurately diagnosed with migraine headaches that she felt a semblance of control again. She kept a headache diary and was finally able to pinpoint triggers that affect the onset of this complex condition of the nervous system—triggers ranging from diet to weather to lack of sleep to that new wine she tried. She received prescriptions for preventive and pain-relieving medications. Every day, even pain-free days, she takes the preventive medication. When she feels a migraine coming on, she takes a pain-relieving drug right away.

At Clinical Research Institute, Inc., a dedicated clinical research site that conducts phase II through IV pharmaceutical research studies, the goal is to find new and improved treatments and better ways to provide care so that people like Mary don't have to suffer. They do this through clinical research studies—a branch of healthcare science that determines the safety and effectiveness of new medications, devices, products, and treatment regimens intended for human use—different from a clinical practice in that research evidence is collected to establish a newer treatment. In a study, volunteers work with physicians, monitors, pharmacists, lab specialists, and others. Sometimes a study leads to new ways to care for a disease or condition (sometimes doctors are already doing what's best), and sometimes results show that there's a new or improved treatment option that's not being utilized to its full potential. In the past 30 years, Clinical Research Institute has conducted over 800 studies in the fields of allergy, asthma, atopic dermatitis, COPD, vaccines, tension headache, migraine headache, and devices.

Close monitoring of migraine frequency and medication use can lead to appropriate preventive therapies, improving the lives of those who get this recurring head pain as well as the lives of their loved ones. New ways to treat and prevent migraine headaches are being vigorously studied in the research community, and volunteers are needed to participate in these studies so that new, *safe*, and *effective* therapies can be made available to those who suffer from this debilitating condition.



**Dr. Gary Berman** is active in clinical research, acting as principal investigator of studies in asthma, allergy, headache, and migraine (he devotes 25 percent of his practice to helping headache patients). A board-certified allergist-immunologist and certified by the National Board for Certification in Headache Management, he received his medical degree from Mayo Medical School and has been in practice for 25 years. He is affiliated with Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota, Allina Abbott Northwestern Hospital, and North Memorial Hospital, and is an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Minnesota, Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care.



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