

What are the different phases of a migraine attack?

There are up to four phases of a migraine attack, but not everyone who experiences migraine goes through all of these stages.



Prodrome

This phase (also called the “premonitory phase”) usually starts about a day before the attack starts. During prodrome, you might notice changes alerting you that a migraine is coming. These changes can include:

- Unexplained mood changes
- Feeling more sensitive to light, sounds, or smells
- Craving certain foods
- Yawning repeatedly
- Increased thirst and urination



Aura

This phase can happen just before or during a migraine headache. Symptoms of aura are usually visual, and you might see flashing or bright lights or zig-zag lines. You might also have nonvisual symptoms like weak muscles, difficulty speaking, or numbness in part of your body.



Headache

During this phase, you might feel throbbing or pulsing pain on one or both sides of your head. The pain usually starts slowly and then becomes more intense, and it can get worse when you move, cough, or sneeze. You might feel extra sensitive to light, sounds, and smells. Many people feel nauseous during this phase and sometimes vomit. Some people have migraine attacks without a headache but can still experience other migraine symptoms.



Postdrome

This phase—sometimes called a “migraine hangover”—comes after the headache and can last for a day or two. You may feel drained, weak, and confused, and you might also have some lingering migraine symptoms.

SOURCE: National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke
