



Is Your Headache a Migraine?



Chaohua Yan, M.D.

Almost everyone experiences a headache from time to time, but is it a migraine?

With June being National Migraine and Headache Awareness Month, Board Certified Neurologist Chaohua Yan, M.D., outlined the symptoms of a migraine and when to seek treatment.

Dr. Yan is affiliated with the Neurology Center of Salem and Salem Regional Medical Center's (SRMC) medical staff.

"Migraine headaches are often far more debilitating than a tension headache," she explained. "A migraine typically causes severe throbbing pain, usually on one side of the head, and can last between four and 72 hours if untreated."

Chronic migraine sufferers may experience frequent headaches, defined as occurring more than 15 days a month for at least three months; which interfere greatly with their work, family and social activities.

Migraine symptoms can include:

- An intense, throbbing ache on one side of the head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Abdominal pain
- Sensitivity to light, noise or odors
- Flashing lights or bright spots before the headache's onset
- Frequency and duration of a migraine can vary

"Migraines are most common in women and those with a family history of migraine," Dr. Yan continued. "They can be triggered by a variety of factors, including hormonal changes, stress, certain foods, medications, bright lights and lack of sleep."

Dr. Yan suggests seeking the advice of a doctor if headaches are frequent, increase in severity, lack of response to over the counter medications or interfere with daily activities."

“To diagnose migraine, your doctor may recommend keeping a diary that tracks the duration and frequency of your headaches along with any possible triggers.”

“Certain medications may be prescribed to help ease migraines and manage the pain. For those diagnosed with chronic migraines, BOTOX and CGRP (Calcitonin gene-related peptides) inhibitors are breakthrough treatment options.”

Chaohua Yan, M.D., Neurology, treats patients at the Neurology Center of Salem, located inside Salem Regional Medical Center at 1995 East State Street in Salem. Appointments with Dr. Yan can be scheduled by calling 330-337-4940. She is affiliated with Salem Regional Medical Center’s medical staff.