

Prepare for warm weather and migraines

For most adults, spring and summer thunderstorms bring the annoyance of driving in a downpour.

But others dread this time of year for migraines triggered by the environment.

What are migraines?

[Aminat Ogun, MD](#), a family medicine physician at OSF HealthCare, describes migraines as episodic disorders that cause severe, throbbing headaches, usually on one side of the brain.

The list of triggers is, unfortunately, long.

“Emotional stress can trigger migraines. Moving, changing jobs, other stressful life situations,” Dr. Ogun says. “A change in sleeping habits can trigger a migraine. Skipping a meal. Your diet: wine, aged cheese, coffee withdrawal and foods high in nitrates.”

Other common triggers include hormones, bright lights, loud sounds and changes in altitude. A propensity for frequent headaches can also run in the family, Dr. Ogun says.

You can prepare

Dr. Ogun says not much is known about weather-induced migraines. But most medical professionals agree there is *some* evidence for migraines caused by changes in barometric pressure.

How can you prepare?

“Up and move,” Dr. Ogun says, tongue firmly planted in cheek.

More realistically, watch the weather forecast. If there’s a chance for a lot of dust or smoke in the air (think areas like California or Arizona), plan to limit time outside.

Stock up on medication after talking with your health care provider. Dr. Ogun says over-the-counter medicine like ibuprofen will help with pain and can even be taken ahead of when you know a migraine is coming.

“They could have a headache diary where they write down what causes their headaches, where the pain is located, how long does it last, symptoms and what treatment helps,” Dr. Ogun adds.

If your migraines are more frequent, feel different, or come with other symptoms like confusion, neck rigidity, weakness in the arms or legs, fever or chills, see a doctor right away. Some of those symptoms may be signs of a heart attack or stroke.

Any [head trauma](#), like a sports injury or a car crash, should also be checked on by a doctor.