

Impact of Headache and Migraine in U.S. Veterans

- 36.9% of veterans reported experiencing migraine attacks, compared to 12.7% of non-veterans
- 22.3% of female veterans reported having migraine attacks, compared to 15.4% of male veterans
- 32% of veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) had migraine, compared to 20% without PTSD.
- Post-traumatic headache can occur in up to 92% of individuals who have sustained a mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI)/concussion.
- Returning soldiers who have suffered a deployment-related mTBI/concussion are at even greater risk of chronic daily headache, with a 20% higher prevalence than the general U.S. population

*References at OperationBrainstorm.org and available on request.



OPERATION BRAINSTORM
National Headache Foundation

Dealing with headache or migraine can be tough, and the distinct challenges of military life or the transition back to civilian life can make it even harder.

Operation Brainstorm is here to provide resources, and education to the entire military community.

We understand the sacrifices you've made for our country, and we're here to support veterans, active duty, families and partners impacted by headache disorders, migraine disease, and service-related post-traumatic headache.

Visit OperationBrainstorm.org

You are Not Alone



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Headache Symptoms

Headache symptoms can vary depending on the underlying cause but may include some of the following:

- Chronic pain and discomfort
- Sensitivity to light, sound, or odor
- Vision changes
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dizziness and lightheadedness
- Fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating

It is also common that veterans being treated for migraine have related conditions, including:

- Overweight and Obesity
- Non-headache pain disorders
- Mental health disorders
- Sleep disorders

Causes of Headache and Migraine

May stem from many factors or combination of factors that should be evaluated.

Potential contributing factors are:

- Stress
- Dehydration
- Certain Foods
- Caffeine
- Alcohol
- Sleep Patterns
- Lack of Exercise
- Weather Changes
- Bright Lights
- Loud Sounds
- Certain Smells
- Hormonal Changes
- Family History
- Overuse of some pain medications

Military Factors Contributing to Headache and Migraine

Headache disorders are problematic in veterans beyond the high rate of primary headache disorder. Several factors that can contribute to an increased risk of headache include:

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):

TBI or other injuries sustained during deployment (e.g. whiplash) can lead to headache.

Military-Related Exposures:

Combat-related post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), military sexual trauma-related PTSD, airborne hazards and/or burn pits.

It is crucial to seek medical care and support to receive a timely diagnosis and appropriate treatment.

