

JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

Accommodation and Compliance Series

Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Migraine Headaches

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ODEP

Office of Disability
Employment Policy

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Preface

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JAN'S Accommodation and Compliance Series

Introduction

JAN's Accommodation and Compliance Series is designed to help employers determine effective accommodations and comply with Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each publication in the series addresses a specific medical condition and provides information about the condition, ADA information, accommodation ideas, and resources for additional information.

The Accommodation and Compliance Series is a starting point in the accommodation process and may not address every situation. Accommodations should be made on a case by case basis, considering each employee's individual limitations and accommodation needs. Employers are encouraged to contact JAN to discuss specific situations in more detail.

For information on assistive technology and other accommodation ideas, visit JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) at <https://askjan.org/soar>.

Information about Migraines

Migraine headaches are the most common form of a vascular headache, which is an abnormal function of the brain's blood vessels that causes pain. There are several different types of migraines that have different symptoms associated with them. Examples of migraines include:

- **Classic Migraines:** Classic migraines are one of the most common types of migraines. They involve an aura 10-30 minutes before the migraine. Auras can consist of flashing lights, seeing zig-zag lines, or even temporary vision loss. Symptoms that may be associated with the classic migraine include throbbing or pounding felt in the forehead, temple, or jaw; difficulty with speech; weakness of an arm or leg; and confusion. A classic migraine attack could last up to two days.
- **Common Migraines:** Common migraines are another of the most common types of migraines. They differ from classic migraines because an aura does not precede the attack. However, these symptoms may occur prior to the migraine: mental vagueness, mood changes, fatigue, retention of fluids, diarrhea and increased urination, and nausea and vomiting. Common migraines may last up to four days.
- **Hemiplegic Migraines:** Hemiplegic migraines include symptoms such as temporary paralysis on one side of the body, vision deficits, and vertigo, which occur 10 – 90 minutes prior to the start of the migraine.

- **Ophthal Moplegic:** Ophthalmoplegic migraines include vision problems, such as double vision.
- **Basilar Artery Migraines:** Basilar artery migraines are characterized by a disturbance of a major brain artery. Symptoms may include vertigo, poor muscle coordination, and double vision.
- **Benign Exertional Headache:** Benign external headaches are migraines that are brought on by running, lifting, sneezing, or bending. The headache normally subsides after several minutes.
- **Status Migrainosus:** Status migrainosus is a severe migraine that can last 72 hours or longer and often results in hospitalization.
- **Headache-free Migraine:** Headache-free migraines are characterized by symptoms such as visual problems, nausea and vomiting, and constipation or diarrhea, but consist of no head pain.

Migraines and the Americans with Disabilities Act

The ADA does not contain a list of medical conditions that constitute disabilities. Instead, the ADA has a general definition of disability that each person must meet. A person has a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having an impairment. For more information about how to determine whether a person has a disability under the ADA, see [How to Determine Whether a Person Has a Disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act \(ADAAA\)](#).

Accommodating Employees with Migraines

People with migraines may develop some of the limitations discussed below, but seldom develop all of them. Also, the degree of limitation will vary among individuals. Be aware that not all people with migraines will need accommodations to perform their jobs and many others may only need a few accommodations. The following is only a sample of the possibilities available. Numerous other accommodation solutions may exist.

Questions to Consider:

1. What limitations is the employee experiencing?
2. How do these limitations affect the employee and the employee's job performance?
3. What specific job tasks are problematic as a result of these limitations?
4. What accommodations are available to reduce or eliminate these problems? Are all possible resources being used to determine possible accommodations?

5. Has the employee been consulted regarding possible accommodations?
6. Once accommodations are in place, would it be useful to meet with the employee to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations and to determine whether additional accommodations are needed?
7. Do supervisory personnel and employees need training?

Accommodation Ideas:

Limitations

Headache

- Air Cleaners & Purifiers
- Alternative Lighting
- Anti-Glare Filters for Fluorescent Lights
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Full Spectrum or Natural Lighting Products
- Job Restructuring
- Lighting Gel Filters
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Non-Fluorescent Lighting
- Task Lighting
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely

Stress Intolerance

- Apps for Anxiety and Stress
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Restructuring

- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person

Work-Related Functions

Light

- Alternative Lighting
- Anti-Glare Filters for Fluorescent Lights
- Flexible Schedule
- Fluorescent Light Tube Covers
- Full Spectrum or Natural Lighting Products
- LED Light Filters
- LED Lighting
- Lighting Gel Filters
- Modified Lighting
- Non-Fluorescent Lighting
- Personal Visors
- Simulated Skylights and Windows
- Sun/UV Protective Clothing
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Transparent Window Shades
- UV Protection Shelters
- Vehicle Window Tinting and Shades

Noise

- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Fans
- Flexible Schedule

- Folding Wall Partitions and Room Dividers
- Noise Abatement
- Noise Canceling Headsets
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely

Stress

- Apps for Anxiety and Stress
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- On-site Mentoring
- Service Animal
- Simulated Skylights and Windows
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person
- Task Rotation
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Uninterrupted Work Time

Situations and Solutions:

An employee who works in a cubicle setting was experiencing migraine headaches that were triggered by the noise level; she was located in a high traffic area by the copy machine.

The employer accommodated this employee by moving her to an area with less traffic and providing an environmental sound machine.

An accountant had a migraine headache about twice a week, which prevented him from coming to work.

As an accommodation, the employer allowed this employee to work for home when he had a migraine headache. If his migraine was too severe to work from home, the employee was allowed to use comp time.

A computer programmer experienced migraines that were triggered by the noise level in his cubicle and the overhead fluorescent lighting.

As an accommodation, his employer provided him with a noise canceling headset, disabled the fluorescent light above his cubicle, and provided natural task lighting.

A journalist had difficulty recovering from shingles.

She was experiencing chronic migraines and depression from six weeks of shingles, which manifested around her right eye. Her employer granted her extended leave to work on her recovery.

A police officer experienced migraines that were triggered by fragrances.

The employer allowed the employee to work a modified schedule and assigned them to low volume areas where it would be less likely that the individual would come into contact with people wearing fragrances.

An assembly line worker's migraines were triggered by various fragrances.

The employees around him often wore overwhelming perfumes that caused him to have a migraine. As an accommodation, the employer asked other employees to voluntarily refrain from wearing fragrances. The employee was also moved to a part of the assembly line where the fragrances were not as strong.

A human resource representative had migraines several times a month, which prevented her from working.

As an accommodation, the employer provided unpaid flexible leave after all of her paid leave was exhausted.

Products

There are numerous products that can be used to accommodate people with limitations. JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource at <https://askjan.org/soar> is designed to let users explore various accommodation options. Many product vendor

lists are accessible through this system; however, JAN provides these lists and many more that are not available on the Web site upon request. Contact JAN directly if you have specific accommodation situations, are looking for products, need vendor information, or are seeking a referral.

Resources

Job Accommodation Network

West Virginia University
PO Box 6080
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
Toll Free: (800) 526-7234
TTY: (304) 293-7186
Fax: (304) 293-5407
jan@askjan.org
<http://AskJAN.org>

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the employability of people with disabilities.

Office of Disability Employment Policy

200 Constitution Avenue,
NW, Room S-1303
Washington, DC 20210
Toll Free: (866) 633-7365
odep@dol.gov
<http://dol.gov/odep>

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Labor. ODEP provides national leadership to increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities while striving to eliminate barriers to employment.

American Academy of Neurology

201 Chicago Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55415
Toll Free: (800) 879-1960
Direct: (612) 928-6000
Fax: (612) 454-2746
memberservices@aan.com
<http://www.aan.com/>

The American Academy of Neurology (AAN) provides valuable resources for medical specialists worldwide who are committed to improving the care of patients with neurological diseases.

American Chronic Pain Association

P.O. Box 850
Rocklin, CA 95677-0850
Toll Free: (800) 533-3231
Fax: (916) 632-3208
ACPA@theacpa.org
<http://www.theacpa.org>

The purpose of the American Chronic Pain Association is to facilitate peer support and education for individuals with chronic pain and their families so that these individuals may live more fully in spite of their pain.

American Council for Headache Education

19 Mantua Road
Mt. Royal, NJ 08061
Direct: (856) 423-0258
Fax: (856) 423-0082
achehq@talley.com
<http://www.achenet.org/>

To advancing the treatment and management of headache and to raising the public awareness of headache as a valid, biologically based illness.

American Headache Society

19 Mantua Rd.

Mount Royal, NJ 08061

Toll Free: (856) 423-0043

Fax: (856) 423-0082

achehq@talley.com

<http://www.americanheadachesociety.org/>

Our mission is to help those affected by Migraine and other Headache Disorders find and use our voices to empower patients, family members, friends, and care partners. Through education, support, advocacy, and research we will bring hope and banish the feelings of hopelessness that too often accompany these disorders. We will work to dispel myths and misconceptions, thereby working to eliminate the stigma we face all too often and replace it with compassion and understanding.

American Hearing Research Foundation

8 South Michigan Avenue, Suite #814

Chicago, IL 60603-4539

Direct: (312) 726-9670

Fax: (312) 726-9695

lkoch@american-hearing.org

<http://www.american-hearing.org>

To promote, conduct, and furnish financial assistance for medical research into the causes, prevention, and cure of deafness, impaired hearing, and balance disorders; encourage the collaboration of clinical and laboratory research; encourage and improve teaching in the medical aspect of hearing problems; and disseminate the latest and most reliable scientific knowledge to physicians, hearing professionals, and the public.

American Physical Therapy Association

<http://www.moveforwardpt.com/Default.aspx>

MoveForwardPT.com is the official consumer information website of the American Physical Therapy Association.

Excedrin Headache Resource Center

Novartis Consumer Health, Inc.

200 Kimball Drive

Parsippany, NJ 07054

Toll Free: (800) 468-7746

NovartisOTC.us@novartis.com

<https://www.excedrin.com/latest-news-and-headache-resources.shtml>

The resources provided here can help you in the prevention of headache pain, treating headache pain with and without medication, and in finding clinics and associations that address the needs of headache sufferers.

Mayo Clinic

13400 E. Shea Blvd.

Scottsdale, AZ 85259

Direct: (480) 301-8000

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/>

The Mayo Clinic's mission to inspire hope and contribute to health and well-being by providing the best care to every patient through integrated clinical practice, education and research.

MedlinePlus

8600 Rockville Pike

Bethesda, MD 20894

custserv@nlm.nih.gov

<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>

MedlinePlus is the National Institutes of Health's Web site for patients and their families and friends. Produced by the National Library of Medicine, the world's largest medical library, it brings you information about diseases, conditions, and wellness issues in language you can understand. MedlinePlus offers reliable, up-to-date health information, anytime, anywhere, for free.

Created by the U.S. National Library of Medicine

Migraine Association of Ireland

Unit 14, Block 5,
Port Tunnel Business Park,
Clonshaugh, Dublin 17.

info@migraine.ie

<http://www.migraine.ie/>

Providing information, support and reassurance to migraine sufferers and those with other headache disorders.

Migraine Relief Center

810 Waugh Dr

Ste 200

Houston, TX 77019

Toll Free: (866) 582-8863

<http://www.themigrainereliefcenter.com/>

The Migraine Relief Center provides revolutionary treatment for its patients. We believe that every patient deserves to have relief from migraine pain. Obtain lasting results. Eliminate your need for costly medications. Get your life back.

National Center for Biotechnology Information

8600 Rockville Pike

Bethesda, MD 20894

pubmedcentral@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>

MISSION: IMS brings together an international community of health care professionals, researchers, educators, and others to improve care and transform delivery of treatment to those suffering from soft tissue pain through the promotion and exchange of globally recognized research, education, and innovation in patient care.

National Fibromyalgia & Chronic Pain Association

31 Federal Avenue

Logan, UT 84321

Toll Free: (801) 200-3627

info@fmcpaware.org

<http://www.fmcpaware.org/>

The National Fibromyalgia & Chronic Pain Association (NFMCPA) is a 501(c)3 not for profit organization. We support people with chronic pain illnesses and their families and friends by contributing to caring, professional, and community relationships. Through continuing education, networking with support groups and advocates, and affiliation with professional organizations, the members of the NFMCPA have a place to be informed, get involved, and recognize achievements.

National Headache Foundation

820 N. Orleans

Suite 217

Chicago, IL 60610

Direct: (312) 274-2650

info@headaches.org

<http://www.headaches.org/>

Over the past 45 years, our mission at the National Headache Foundation has been to further awareness of headache and migraine as legitimate neurobiological diseases. Much has changed during this time, and with aid from advanced technology and clinical innovation, there are more treatment options than ever before. However, we understand that these diseases are still largely misunderstood and that finding the right treatment options for you requires nuanced and adaptable insight.

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

P.O. Box 5801

Bethesda, MD 20824

Toll Free: (800) 352-9424

Direct: (301) 496-5751

<http://www.ninds.nih.gov>

The NINDS, an agency of the U.S. Federal Government and a component of the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Public Health Service, is a lead agency for the congressionally designated Decade of the Brain, and the leading supporter of biomedical research on disorders of the brain and nervous system.

Remedy's Health Communities

<http://www.healthcommunities.com>

Remedy Health Media is America's fastest growing health information and technology company. We are a leading provider of clinical resources and wellness tools that help millions of patients and caregivers live healthier, more fulfilled lives.

Our mission is to empower patients and caregivers with the information and applications needed to efficiently navigate the healthcare landscape and as a result, to permit better health outcomes through use of our products and services.

World Health Organization

525 Twenty-third Street
N.W.

Washington, DC 20037

Direct: (202) 974-3000

Fax: (202) 974-3663

<http://www.who.int/en/>

We are the directing and coordinating authority on international health within the United Nations' system.

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