

What to  
tell your  
**kids**  
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# What to tell your kids about your migraines.

As a parent, you always want to take the best possible care of your children. But when you get a migraine, your needs may have to come before theirs, and that can make any parent feel guilty. It's important to remind yourself that you can't do your best for your kids unless you take care of yourself first.



Whether you have young children or teenagers, they're bound to feel the disruption in family life when a migraine strikes. You're the parent, the one who's supposed to "be there" for them — preparing the meals, helping with homework, attending school functions,

driving them here and there. When you're suffering from a migraine, you may have a hard time getting everything done. This can cause some children to feel disappointed, angry, even neglected. That's why you really need to talk to them.

So how can you educate your children about your migraines and tell them simply what you're going through? How can you ease their worries and doubts? And what can you ask them to do for you during a migraine?

# Here are some helpful suggestions.

## **Be straightforward with teens.**

Teenagers are old enough to understand the facts of migraine, recognize the condition when you're suffering, and know what they can do to help you. But, being teenagers, they're apt to be forgetful, oblivious, or too self-centered to empathize and help. Don't beat around the bush; tell them exactly what you need for yourself and what you need from them:

- peace and quiet
- greater responsibility for household chores
- attention and care for younger children
- availability to run errands
- flexibility in scheduling activities

Of course, you hate to sound overly demanding. So explain that any individual migraine is temporary and that with the help of your medication, you and your teen will soon return to life as usual.

## **Reassurance is important for younger children.**

The most important thing to tell young children is that you love them and will be back to your old self as soon as you feel better. But do explain, simply:

- how migraines make you feel — your head hurts, sometimes your tummy hurts, sometimes you throw up
- what you may need — rest or sleep for a while, alone; a dark room, because light hurts your head; and quiet, because noise hurts your head
- what they can do — play quietly in another room, and help others around the house

Also be sure to tell your kids that you're taking medicine to help your migraines. Reassure them that there are also other people they can count on (your spouse, their older siblings, a neighbor) until you're feeling better.

