

New Abortive Treatments for Migraine Attacks

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A migraine is a type of headache that, in addition to pain, can be associated with nausea, vomiting, and sensitivity to light or sound. Some patients may experience an aura, which may consist of a temporary visual disturbance shortly before the headache. It is estimated that more than 37 million people in the United States suffer from migraines. It is ranked as the 3rd most common disease in the World, and effects about 1 in 7 people globally. Additionally, migraines occur 3X more in women than men, and effect about 10% of school-aged children.

Thus, with so many individual's quality of life impacted by migraines new treatment options are desperately needed. Standard abortive treatments include NSAIDs, analgesics, opioids, triptans, and ergots. While triptans and ergots are effective in alleviating acute migraine attacks, about 25% of patients do not respond to triptans. While other individuals have intolerable side effects or certain medical conditions that limit triptan use (coronary artery disease, peripheral artery disease, or stroke). To help more migraine sufferers new molecules and mechanisms are needed for acute treatment, such as CGRP.



CGRP (Calcitonin Gene Related Peptide), is an inflammatory protein that is released during a migraine attack by the trigeminal nerve. CRGP causes worsening inflammation around the brain and promotes dilation of arteries, which intensify the pain signal pathways. These new medications called CGRP antagonists block the CRGP receptor, and prevent CGRP proteins from turning on the painful inflammatory pathway.



In 2020 the FDA approved two new oral medications in the class of "GEPANTS" or CGRP antagonists for the use of acute migraine attacks, Rimegepant (Nurtec ODT) and Ubrogapant (Ubrelvy). Compared to other acute migraine medications (triptans) the "GEPANTS" side effect profile is more favorable and provides a potentially safer alternative. Moreover, these medications are not associated with addiction potential or medication overuse that can occur with other analgesics.

Nurtec ODT (oral-dissolving tablet), produced by Biohaven, is a tablet that dissolves under the tongue in seconds and starts working in minutes (i.e 15 mins). With potential pain freedom lasting up to 48 hours, Nurtec ODT can be taken anywhere at any time. The dose is a 75mg ODT tablet with a single dose in a 24-hour period.

Ubrelvy, produced by Allergan, is an oral tablet that relieves migraine pain within 2 hours with just one dose, but if needed a repeat dose (2nd dose) can be administered. The dose is a 50mg or 100mg pill, with a second dose repeated 2 hours after the initial dose, with a daily maximum of 200mg. While it is exciting to see these new options available in migraine treatment, it is still important to find which option is best for you.

If you suffer from migraines, we encourage you to learn more and explore your options with one of our board-certified pain relief experts today.



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- Graduated from University of Miami Miller School of Medicine in 2008.
- Residency in Anesthesiology in the Department of Anesthesiology at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami.
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