

PATTERNS

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## Preventing Women's Migraines

Many women who suffer migraines tell their doctors that their attacks are related to the onset of menstruation. Two studies released yesterday lend support to that link and to the idea of timing medication to the menstrual cycle as a preventive measure.

Both studies were published in the journal *Neurology*.

The lead author of one of the studies, Dr. E. Anne MacGregor of the City of London Migraine Clinic, said that in general about half of women with migraines say their headaches come on more often and with greater severity just before menstruation. Earlier studies had not found evidence of the connection, Dr. MacGregor said, because

women with migraines connect to the menstrual cycle and women whose migraines were not connected canceled each other out.

The new study overcame that difficulty by comparing the onset and severity of attacks within a group of 155 women who all had suspected menstrual migraines, she said.

Entries in diaries the women were asked to keep showed that they were more than twice as likely to suffer migraines during the first three days of menstruation as they were on other days, and that the menstrual migraines were more than three times as likely to be severe as those at other times.

The second study found that fewer than half the women who took anti-migraine drug, frovatriptan before and during the onset of menstruation suffered headaches, compared with two-thirds of women given a placebo.

Dr. MacGregor said women suffering migraines should use diaries to discern patterns in attacks, or fertility monitors if they are uncertain about predicting menstruation. Even without preventive medication, "women in our study reported that this helped them to feel more in control of their migraine," she said.



PREVENTION

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## Condoms and Pelvic Inflammation

Women whose sexual partners regularly use condoms can reduce by half their risk of developing pelvic inflammatory disease, a painful condition that can lead to infertility, according to a new study.

Writing in the August issue of *The American Journal of Public Health*, researchers said their findings offered evidence that condoms, well established as barriers against viral infection, also help prevent the kinds of bacterial infection that can cause P.I.D., as the disease is known. The study was led by Dr. Roberta B. Ness of the University of Pittsburgh.

Each year, the researchers said, about a million American women have a serious episode of the disease. Apart from the pain it causes, it is believed to leave 100,000 women a year unable to have a baby. It

can also cause pregnancy complications. A variety of bacteria can cause P.I.D., but it is usually a result of sexually transmitted diseases like gonorrhea.

For the study, the researchers asked 684 sexually active women with a history of P.I.D. to keep track of their sexual practices and recurrences of the disease over a period of almost three years. They found that the women who reported using condoms least often were the most likely to have the condition and related problems like chronic pelvic pain and infertility.

Women who used condoms at least 60 percent of the time had significantly fewer problems. Although women in the study had a history of the disease, the researchers said the findings were likely to apply to the general population.