

The missing comparison

A printable companion for a migraine diary. Bring your observations and uncertainties to a care conversation.

One headline can hide two patterns

Both fictional 30-day diaries have 10 headache days. In each, 6 of those days include a suspected factor: the same 60% headline.

Fictional diary	Factor present	Factor absent
Example A	6 / 10 days = 60%	4 / 20 days = 20%
Example B	6 / 20 days = 30%	4 / 10 days = 40%

Percentages above are headache days divided by all recorded days in that column. Every day is known in these examples. Numbers are invented for teaching, not patient data or migraine-risk estimates. Neither comparison proves causation.

Use the next two pages

1. Copy the weekly diary as needed. Choose one clearly described factor to observe in your usual routine.
2. Mark yes, no, or unknown for headache and factor status. Note timing and other symptoms, including symptoms without head pain.
3. Summarise only days with both statuses known. Keep missing days visible and bring the record to your clinician.

Do not deliberately provoke symptoms or change prescribed treatment to test a pattern. Tracking should never delay care. Seek urgent medical help for a sudden, exceptionally severe headache or new weakness, speech difficulty, or confusion.

Sources: NICE CG150 1.1.4; The Migraine Trust, Keeping a headache diary; NHS, Migraine. Direct source links are on page 3.

Your week, including unknowns

Print one copy per week. Y = yes; N = no; ? = unknown. A blank means unknown, not no headache. This page complements your usual diary.

Week beginning: _____ Factor: _____

What counts as this factor being present? _____

Date	Headache Y / N / ?	Factor Y / N / ?	Pain 0-10 / ?	Timing, other symptoms, medication and daily impact

Pain: 0 = no pain, 10 = worst imaginable pain. No headache can still involve other symptoms. If space is tight, add a dated note on a separate sheet.

When possible, note factor time, first symptom time, headache start/end, and medication name, dose, time and response. Record other relevant changes, including menstruation if applicable. Approximate or unknown times are OK.

Bring the whole picture

Review period: _____ Suspected factor: _____

Count each calendar day once

Use only days with known headache AND factor status in this table. The same-day comparison is descriptive; it cannot resolve the order of events or delayed effects.

Known days only	Headache: yes	Headache: no
Factor: yes	A = _____	B = _____
Factor: no	C = _____	D = _____

Total days in period: _____ Known days (A+B+C+D): _____ Unknown days: _____

On days with the factor: $A / (A+B) \times 100 = \text{_____}\%$

On days without the factor: $C / (C+D) \times 100 = \text{_____}\%$

If a denominator is zero, write "not calculable." These percentages are observations, not a diagnosis, causal finding, or prediction. Small samples and missing entries can mislead. Discuss the details with your clinician.

Questions to bring

Did symptoms begin before the factor? What else changed? Were the weeks typical? Were the hardest days the ones I could not record?

Source guidance and further reading

NICE CG150, assessment - [nice.org.uk/guidance/cg150](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg150)

The Migraine Trust - Keeping a headache diary

NHS - Migraine: [nhs.uk/conditions/migraine](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/migraine)