



Topic

Light Sensitivity and Therapy for
MigraineTitle &
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Speaker

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Although it is more common with migraine, light sensitivity can also go along with other headache types, such as cluster headache and tension-type headache.
- Light sensitivity can be both a symptom of and a trigger of migraine.
- There are some conditions that can cause extreme light sensitivity, but sometimes people can take it too far and avoid all light because they have fear or anxiety of it causing pain. This is not beneficial.
- If light sensitivity is a migraine trigger, the migraine will usually come on almost instantly, whereas if it's part of the prodrome, other symptoms will likely accompany it and the migraine will build after a longer interval.
- Researchers have found that different colors of light can produce different emotional responses in people, with green tending to be most calming and soothing to people, particularly those with migraine.
- Excessive screen time can cause dry eye, which is the most common cause of photophobia.

TREATMENTS CITED

CGRP medications
FL-41 tinted lenses
Green light therapy
Red contact lenses or red sunglasses
Yellow lenses

QUOTES

“You have to think of migraine as this diffuse brain process. And a lot of the things that are going on in the brain that have to do with pain, also are involved in the so-called associated symptoms of migraine, as well.”

“When migraine becomes chronic, probably [people] get sensitization of those neurons in the brain. It takes less of a threshold to activate them. And they kind of get into this state where they're always light sensitive, even if they don't have a headache. And that can be a real problem.”



PRACTICAL STEPS

- If you're light sensitive, it's not a good idea to avoid the light altogether and live in a constantly dark environment because then you will “dark adapt,” and when you do go into the sunlight, it's going to seem too bright and can cause pain.
- Try using some of the FL-41 tinted lenses that are now widely available online, as well as prescribed by an optometrist.
- Consider trying out red contact lenses or red sunglasses, which are sometimes recommended for some people with light sensitivity.
- Consider using a specialized green lamp.
- An ophthalmologist is a good specialist to start with in seeking solutions to light sensitivity.
- Getting your headaches under control should also improve your photophobia.