

Migraine Resource Kit

Sample letter to employer

Dear employer,

Your employee has been diagnosed with migraines. While some people with migraines can function with minimal impact to job performance, your employee will require some accommodations, per the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Migraine is an incurable, genetic, neurological disorder that affects over 36 million Americans and costs the U.S economy billions in lost work productivity every year. Most migraine patients are completely disabled during an attack. In addition to severe, one-sided head pain, most experience extreme light sensitivity, inability to tolerate even a normal amount of noise, nausea and vomiting, dizziness, tinnitus, visual disturbances and partial blindness. They are unable to think or communicate clearly and may appear drunk or otherwise impaired. Some even experience partial paralysis. Due to the slowing of reflexes during an attack, it is not recommended for patients to drive. If your employee must leave due to a migraine, please consider offering him/her a ride.

Each migraine patient has a unique set of triggers that set off attacks. Some of these triggers may be present in your workplace. You can help your employee avoid many workplace triggers with simple changes. Please discuss with your employee which triggers affect him/her the most.

Some reasonable accommodations for consideration:

1. Replace florescent lighting with incandescent lighting or install filters over the florescent lights. Be diligent in replacing worn out florescent bulbs when they start flashing or buzzing.
2. Institute a fragrance-free policy.
3. Move employee's workspace to a quieter, darker location, perhaps with a door to block out noise.
4. Install filter screen or adjust brightness on computer monitors to reduce eye strain.
5. Permit employee to wear sunglasses to protect from bright lights.
6. Offer a quiet place for employees to rest at the onset of an attack so they don't have to leave work in order to treat an attack.
7. Some patients are triggered by getting overheated. Allowing personal fans, ice packs, and cold beverages can help offset this potential trigger.
8. Offer flexible work hours so migraine patients can leave early or come in late due to an attack and make up the hours later in the week.
9. Offer telework options for days when employees are more vulnerable to attacks (i.e. thunderstorms, hormone fluctuations, etc.)

Thank you for taking the time to consider what you can do to accommodate the needs of your employees with migraine so that they can continue to be productive members of your workforce.

Yours truly,



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