



# KELLI YATES

[@THE.MIGRAINE.DIETITIAN](#)

Kelli Yates, RDN, LD, CLT is a private practice Registered Dietitian specializing in migraine and gut health. She was inspired to pursue natural interventions for migraine after dealing with her own diagnosis for over two decades and knowing medications could not be the only solution. Kelli is passionate about promoting a personalized approach for migraine care, empowering migraineurs with evidence-based information, and making nutrition interesting, accessible, and fun! Kelli lives outside of Atlanta, Georgia with her husband (and Operations Manager) David and three cats.

## CONTACT



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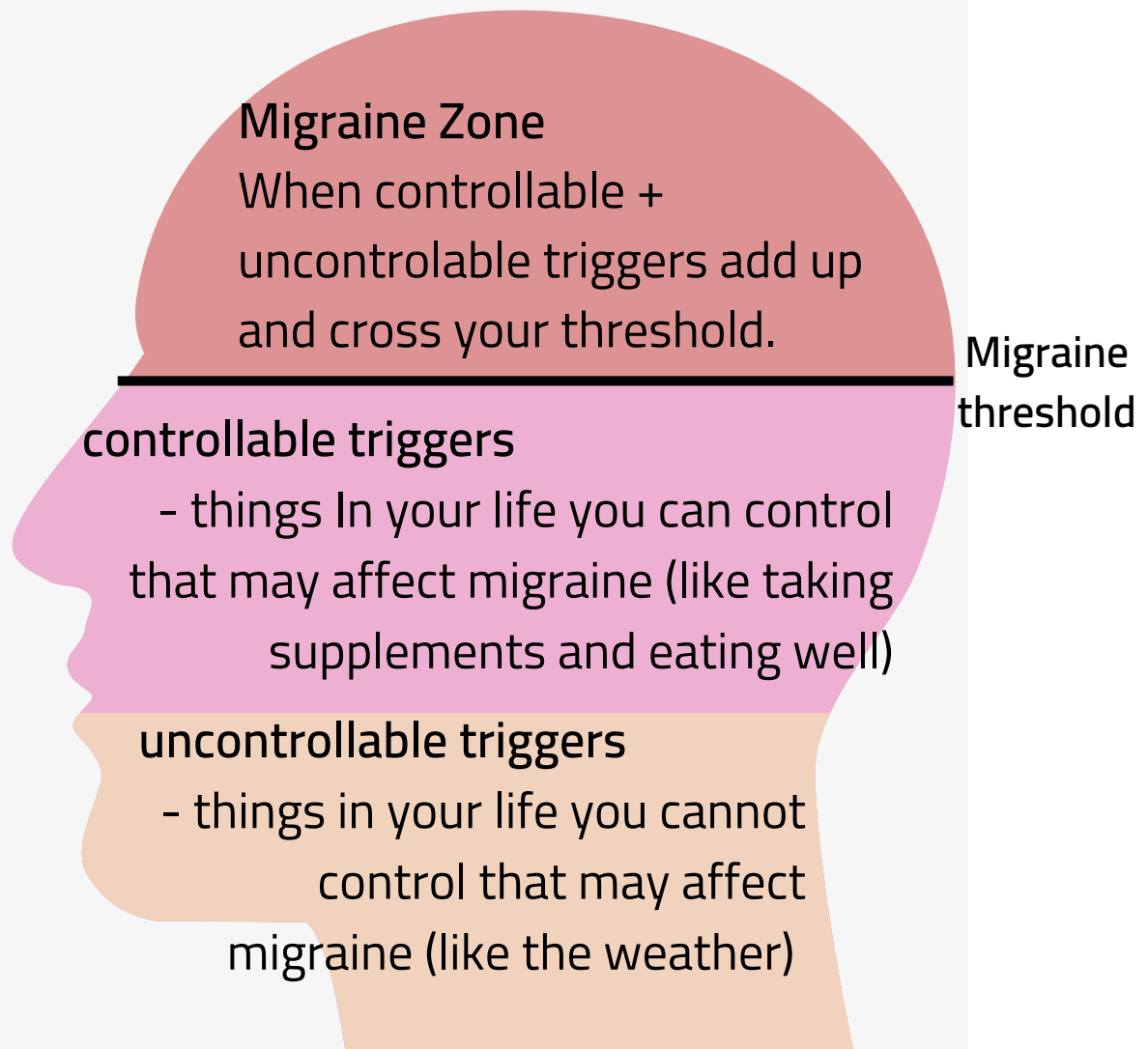
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## EDUCATION & CREDENTIALS

- B.S. in Dietetics
- 1000 hour dietetic internship with clinical concentration
- Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) national credential
- Advanced training in food sensitivities (CLT)
- Advanced training in functional lab testing (Leveraging Labs)

# The Threshold Theory

The threshold theory is one theory that explains migraine attacks



Keep your controllable triggers low by consistently taking care of your body holistically.

Raise your threshold by healing your gut, exercising often, eating well, keeping consistent with your supplements, and more!

# Diet, Vestibular Disorders, and Migraine

All foods are made up of 5 main nutrients

- Proteins
- Fats
- Carbohydrates
- Vitamins
- Minerals

Our bodies need all of these five nutrients for optimal health.

These different nutrients act as different building blocks for our bodies to grow and be nourished.

Adding foods INTO your diet, rather than taking foods and nutrients OUT of your diet, can improve your migraine symptoms.

Three steps to making sure you're on the right track with your diet, according to Kelli:

- Do you feed yourself enough food and eat regularly?
- Are you drinking enough water throughout the day?
- Are you getting outside into nature during the day?

Food helps balance:

- Hormones
- Gut health
- Brain health
- Stress levels
- Blood sugar
- Minerals in your body
- Energy levels
- Adrenal function
- Metabolism
- Brain Fog
- and SO much more!

listen to your body

# Diet, Vestibular Disorders, and Migraine

How do we most effectively eat to support our minds, bodies, and vestibular symptoms?

## 1) Blood sugar balance

- Eat regularly, every 3-4 hours
- If we don't eat regularly, we can throw off our hormones, especially cortisol, making us less hungry. Not eating enough can get us stuck in a low hunger cycle.
- Get protein, fat, and carbs at most meals and snacks.

## 2) Eating to support gut health and bacteria

- The more diversity, the better
- Work as many foods back in as you can if you're
- More different colors, more different kinds of fibers, and other

## 3) Support the Vagus Nerve

- Affects mood
- Affects migraine
- Affects vestibular disorders overall
- Take a few deep breaths before eating to switch to rest and digest mode.

# Diet, Vestibular Disorders, and Migraine

There are many different standpoints about HOW to eat when you have a vestibular/migraine disorder. What is your standpoint about diet, nutrition, and migraine and vestibular disorders?

**Listen to your body first and foremost.**

You know yourself better than anyone else.

Find the root cause of your disorder and work to support your body through that, rather than removing everything from your diet to find a particular trigger.

Intuitive eating can play a big role in eating what feels GOOD for YOUR body, rather than eating what others tell you to eat.

**You can ask yourself simple questions like:**

- How hungry am I right now?
- How will my body feel after eating this food?
- How can I properly nourish myself today?

Intuitive eating honors our body and mind, helps us trust our bodies, and can reduce overall anxiety about what foods may help us feel nourished and safe.

Intuitive eating also helps reduce food fear and stops labeling foods as 'good' and 'bad.'

# Diet, Vestibular Disorders, and Migraine

Should we view the role of food as primarily preventative, or can it also be useful “in the moment” for acute attacks?

**Food can be used either way.**

For example, foods like Ginger everyone loves & can help nip an attack in the bud. Ginger is food and can be used acutely. So, yes, some foods can be used as acute treatments.

But, most foods are used preventatively to treat attacks.

Here are a few ways to eat well for prevention:

- Eat at least 3x/day. Avoid skipping meals and intermittent fasting. Eat when your body is hungry, and honor that hunger.
- Avoid crash diets
- Eat 'well rounded' plates of food. These should include proteins, fats, and carbs.

Find the root cause of your migraine attacks. A deeper root cause can be hormone imbalances, stress & adrenal health, gut imbalances, lack of sleep, poorly balanced meals, etc.

Migraine and vestibular disorders are unlikely to come from JUST a few food triggers. It's typically a whole laundry list of reasons. These lower your threshold for an attack and make it more likely to have an attack.

Eliminating foods can decrease gut health, take you away from social events, increase fatigue, reduce the likelihood of doing physical activity, and often increases stress.

This can lower your threshold and make attacks more likely as well.

# Diet, Vestibular Disorders, and Migraine

What are your thoughts on probiotics?

What is a general good probiotic to help with gut health?

**Probiotics have been found to be helpful with gut health.**

**They need to be taken every day when you are taking one for gut health.**

Taking probiotics to support your gut can be really helpful. But, you may need a stool test to determine which is most effective and needed for you.

So, one that can be helpful is from [Bio-Kult](#), and they have a prebiotic that has been studied for those with migraine conditions and is a good general probiotic for anyone. Gut health testing can be really helpful.

Gut health testing is usually best; if you have the ability to work with a dietician or functional doctor, a GIMap test can be incredibly helpful.

# Diet, Vestibular Disorders, and Migraine

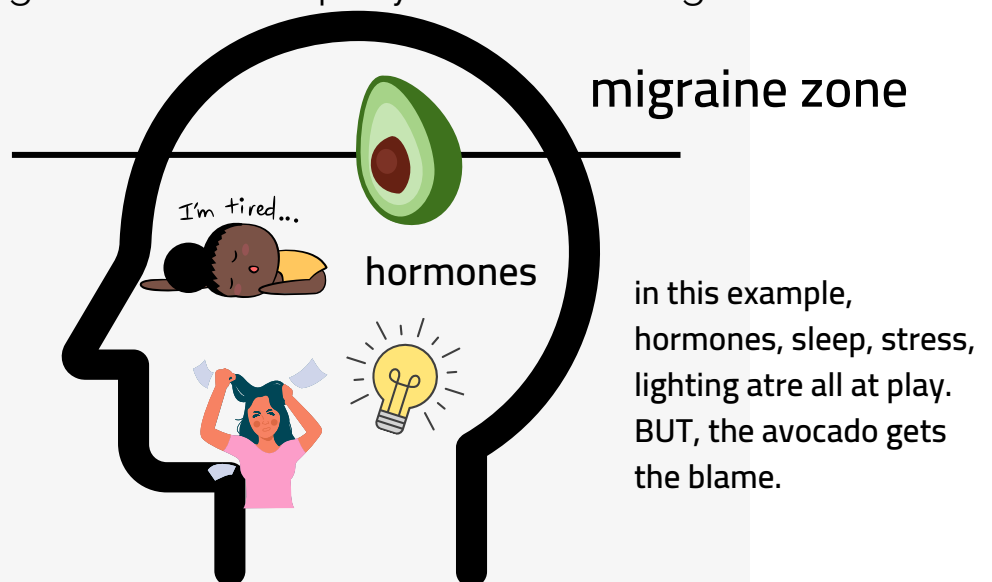
What are food triggers and why do we have them?

Food triggers are unique to each person, and a load of them can be a part of your 'uncontrollable trigger' levels. Some people have none, and others have seemingly endless triggers.

This can cause food fear and anxiety or trigger an eating disorder.

Yes, triggers are real. There are a lot of ways you can have a reaction, either an allergy (like itchiness) or a sensitivity (delayed) which often affects migraine.

A load of triggers stacked up can be weather, stress, lights, and more. Then, it seems like a singular food will tip you over the edge and trigger a migraine. In reality, it's a bunch of things all stacked up together and food put you over the edge



Then the typical ones are tyramine and histamine, which are thought to affect blood vessels and, therefore, these conditions. Listen to your body; you should find which foods resonate with you. Don't just follow a list because one person told you to.



# Diet, Vestibular Disorders, and Migraine

What if we aren't sure if something is a trigger?  
Is there something with cravings we should consider?

**A prodrome symptom is the first phase of a migraine attack and can sometimes include food cravings.**

There is NOT good research to show that things like chocolate, cheese, and other apparent food triggers are triggers for an attack. However, we know that craving foods like chocolate and cheese could be a prodrome symptom. Then, someone eats the food, which seems to trigger an attack.

In reality, you were already having an attack. During the prodrome phase, your body gives you a sign (a craving as a symptom) and, therefore, an opportunity to treat that attack.

Instead of thinking of that craving as only having chocolate, think of it as your body's way of talking to you and telling you that you need to treat an attack immediately.

So, have your chocolate and rescue medication.

# Diet, Vestibular Disorders, and Migraine

Do we need a low sodium diet for vestibular disorders?

**This is very specific, depending on your diagnosis.**

**For Meniere's Disease, we need a lower sodium diet.**

This is so we can have decreased pressure and fluid build-up in the inner ear. This will help you not retain as much fluid, and you will not be as susceptible to a fluid imbalance in your inner ear.

**For POTS, we need a higher sodium diet.**

We want higher sodium to retain more fluid in our bodies if we have low blood pressure and other autonomic symptoms.

**For Migraine, we usually need an average sodium diet.**

Sodium affects blood pressure, which can affect migraine, as can other sodium-sensitive diagnoses. So, if you have another diagnosis where you need a low sodium diet and migraine, it's good to stay on top of that with a specific diet.

For others, MSG can trigger a migraine. It's mono-SODIUM-glutamate. So, hefty doses of salt can trigger migraine or other vestibular attacks for sensitive people.

# Diet, Vestibular Disorders, and Migraine

What if you went on an elimination diet, it did not really seem to help, but adding them back in is seemingly impossible?

**There is a way to reintroduce foods systematically and intentionally.**

Here's what **NOT** to do:

1. **Stay on an elimination diet forever** because you will have a significant loss of nutrients in your body. You will not be able to eat that whole, well-rounded diet if you're on an elimination diet forever.
2. **Say 'I am sick of this' and add them all in at once** because you will likely get an attack, if not multiple. And you will not be able to find the triggers you were working diligently to discover.

Here's what you **SHOULD** do:

1- systematically finish the diet by adding in more and more foods to see if they're triggers. It's unlikely you are triggered by each one.

- You can get an MRT food sensitivity test through a dietitian or functional medicine doctor.
- You can get a food sensitivity test elsewhere (be sure to look into the reliability first).
- You can reintroduce foods one by one to figure out exactly which you are sensitive to and which are not.

# Diet, Vestibular Disorders, and Migraine

What if you went on an elimination diet, it did not really seem to help, but adding them back in is seemingly impossible?

**If you can't get back to baseline, what do I do?**

If you're feeling stuck, [here's a free guide](#).

If you're having trouble finding a baseline, ask yourself: have you noticed any improvements? Do I feel any better?

- If not, you may just be able to stop the diet altogether. Normally, you want to be systematic about it, but if it's not helping, just stop the diet.
- If it has helped, but you don't feel confident adding foods back in, then look at other factors (stress, sleep, movement, etc.) that need to be addressed.

Often we are eliminating food and then becoming afraid of those foods.

Again, try to get to a place where you can find the root cause of gut health and other factors rather than cutting out every food blindly.

# Diet, Vestibular Disorders, and Migraine

How do histamine and tyramine relate to migraine and vestibular dysfunction?

**Histamine is a chemical the body naturally produces that we need in appropriate amounts.**

It's not a good thing if we have too much or if we can't break it down appropriately, and a low histamine diet is not intended to be done forever.

Many people have an underlying issue that makes it so you can't break down histamine. You may get symptoms such as: chronic sinus infections, itchiness, issues getting flushed often, and other symptoms. Not being able to process histamine is usually the issue, rather than simply making too much of it.

It could be an enzyme deficiency, an overload of bad gut bacteria, a hormonal issue, or other reasons.

DAO (diamine oxidase) and HNMT (histamine-N-methyltransferase) are the enzymes that break down histamine in the body. But, for some people, these enzymes are not as plentiful, which makes histamine more difficult to break down.

Food and diets are a short-term solution because a low histamine diet is often more difficult than even Heal Your Headache.

DAO production and use can be inhibited by alcohol and drugs (prescription). You can find the list by [clicking here](#) and scrolling to Table 5.

# Diet, Vestibular Disorders, and Migraine

How do histamine and tyramine relate to migraine and vestibular dysfunction?

**DAO needs to be addressed holistically, not by an antihistamine diet.**

There are ways to support your DAO enzyme nutritionally:

- Vitamin C
- Vitamin B6
- Calcium
- Zinc
- Magnesium
- Iron
- Vitamin B12

**Most importantly:**

- Eat a well-rounded diet
- Eat a rainbow of foods, proteins, fats, carbs, and other nutrients
- Ask a dietitian about which nutrients, supplements, and foods you should eat.

Please talk to your doctor before changing or introducing new vitamins and supplements!

listen to your body

Laura Maintz, Natalija Novak, Histamine and histamine intolerance, The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Volume 85, Issue 5, May 2007, Pages 1185–1196, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcn/85.5.1185>

Miyoshi M, Ueno M, Matsuo M, Hamada Y, Takahashi M, Yamamoto M, Yamamoto I, Mikajiri R, Tabuchi S, Wakida K, Yamanishi M, Hirai M, Usami M. Effect of dietary fatty acid and micronutrient intake/energy ratio on serum diamine oxidase activity in healthy women. Nutrition. 2017 Jul-Aug;39-40:67-70. doi: 10.1016/j.nut.2017.03.004. Epub 2017 Mar 28. PMID: 28606572.

# Diet, Vestibular Disorders, and Migraine

## Quick Q&A

### **Are things like green's powders useful?**

Mostly no. Most of them are like a multivitamin, and we need to try out best to get them.

And, If you have food triggers, you want to do a quick scan and see if other artificial ingredients in there may or may not sit well with you.

### **What do we think about monk fruit and other fake sugar?**

Our bodies expect sugar, and there's nothing inherently wrong with sugar. The best choices are monk fruit and stevia if you want an alternative. However, dysbiosis (gut imbalance) can come from the 'fake' versions like Splenda. The research is not strong here, but some people do find these are triggers for them.

### **Does Vitamin D play a role in helping vestibular disorders?**

BPPV does need Vitamin D for prevention

Most people with migraine spend more time indoors, which is linked with

Low vitamin D has also been linked with Neuritis and Meniere's Disease.

Most doctors will test for it at your annual.

### **What are your top 5 favorite foods to reintroduce?**

Make a list of your favorite foods you miss that would make your life easier if you had them back.

# Diet, Vestibular Disorders, and Migraine

## What's the deal with Omega's and Migraine?

Omega 3 and 6's are everywhere In fatty foods, and we know that high Omega-3 and lowering Omega-6 in our diets can help our migraine attacks.

But, Omega-6 fatty acids are hard to cut out for the average American. Omega-6 Is everywhere - in oils, processed foods, nuts and seeds, and more.

Omega-3 fatty acids are often considered 'healthier' in foods like avocado, fatty fish (cold-water fish species, like salmon, sardines, and mackerel), flaxseeds, and more.

We know that lowering 6 and raising 3's is helpful, but it's not realistic for most Americans. So, there's a new study out, and it wants to know: if we raise our Omega-3 intake without touching the Omega-6 intake, is there a difference in migraine pain and frequency?

The answer was a resounding yes!

Intakes of more Omega-3 (the kind found in fish oil and Omega capsules) decrease sensitization of the trigeminal nerve and a reduction in headache/day and headache/month.

A dual diet, low 6 and high 3 produced even bigger results.

Whichever you find more approachable is an excellent opportunity!



# Diet, Vestibular Disorders, and Migraine

## What's the Gut-Brain Axis?

The gut and the brain communicate all the time and having a healthy gut is essential for brain health. Your gut is responsible for what comes in and out of our gut to our brain, which nutrients get absorbed, and which don't. So, it's important to keep our guts healthy to keep our brains healthy.

We can't know if we have a healthy gut because we don't have the testing. BUT, we do know that if we are having symptoms part of the underlying causes may be poor gut health. So, supporting your gut in that way is essential for migraine and brain health.

## What about Gluten and Migraine?

There is a link between Celiac and Migraine diseases. The treatment for Celiac is to remove gluten from the diet. And some people with migraine will see their symptoms improve, but not everyone. Those with non-celiac gluten sensitivity have similar symptoms without the disease. We don't know why this may be, but there's not much research to show this will help with migraine.

## What about Dairy and Migraine?

Dairy and migraine don't have a lot of research to affect each other. There is also no research that shows it even causes inflammation for many people. For some, it could even be helpful for inflammation.

# DISCLAIMER

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