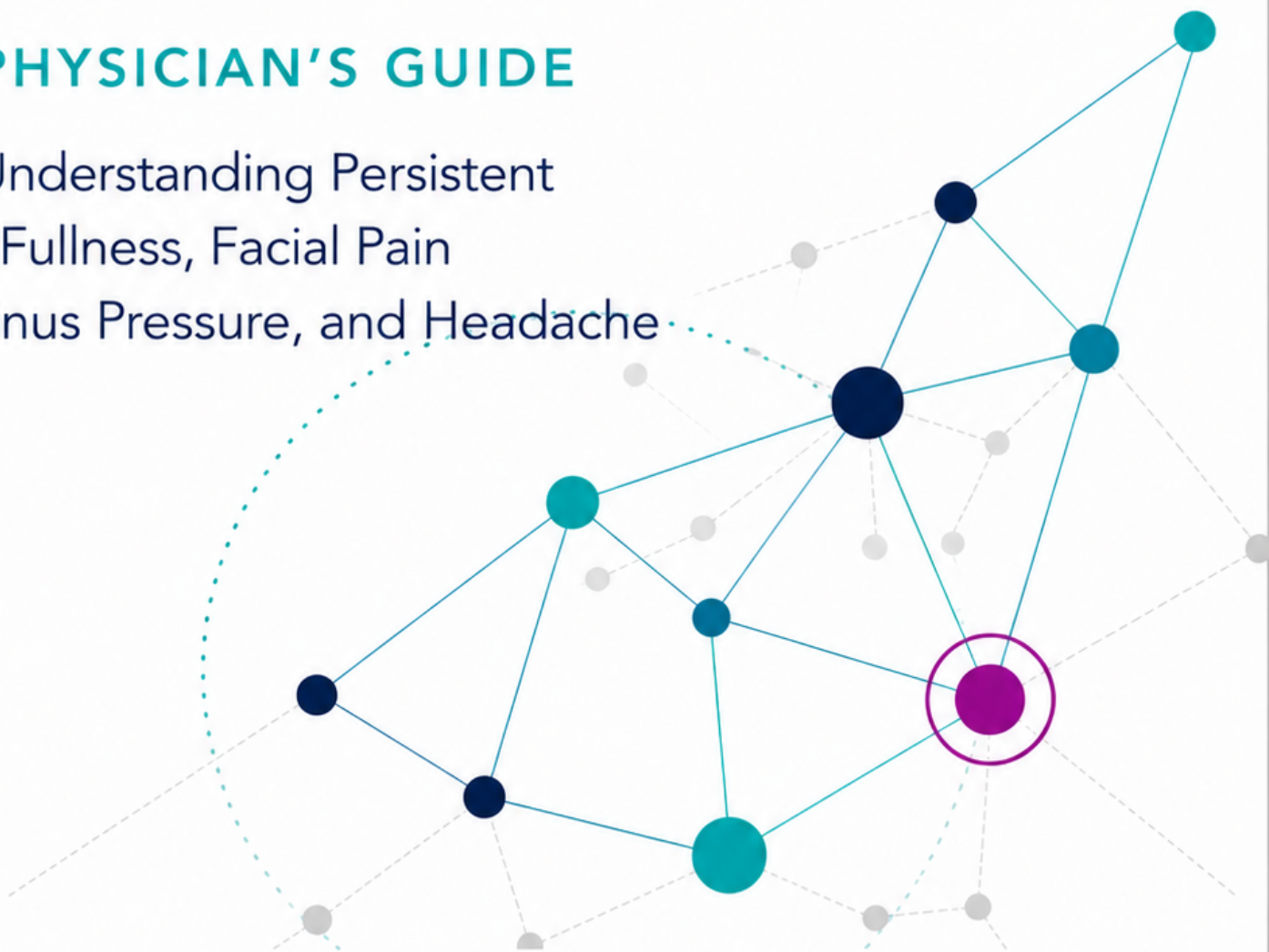


CONNECT THE DOTS

A PHYSICIAN'S GUIDE

to Understanding Persistent
Ear Fullness, Facial Pain
& Sinus Pressure, and Headache



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Why I created this guide

Patients often come to my office with symptoms that do not fit neatly into one category.

Their ears may feel full or clogged. They may have facial or sinus pressure, headache, dizziness, sound sensitivity, fatigue, or brain fog. Some assume the problem must be their ears or sinuses. Others have never considered migraine because their symptoms do not look like what they think of as a “typical” migraine.”

But the location of a symptom does not always tell us what is causing it.

That is why I look at the whole picture.

This guide will help you begin to recognize your symptom pattern, connect the dots, and organize what you are experiencing so you can have a more informed conversation with your physician.

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Where do you feel it?

Before thinking about what may be causing your symptoms, start with **where you feel them**.

Use the illustration to mark the areas where you most commonly experience pressure or pain.

Where do you feel your symptoms?

- ☐ Forehead
- ☐ Around or behind the eyes
- ☐ Temples
- ☐ Nose or midface
- ☐ Cheeks
- ☐ Upper jaw
- ☐ Lower jaw
- ☐ Ears
- ☐ Other: _____



Why location matters

Much of the sensation from the face and head travels through branches of the trigeminal nerve, an important sensory nerve that also plays a role in migraine.

Where you feel a symptom is one piece of the puzzle. It does not necessarily tell us what is causing it.

Which area bothers you the most?

What else happens with it?

Location is only one part of the picture. Symptoms that occur along with ear fullness, facial pressure, sinus pressure, or headache can provide additional clues.

Check any that sound familiar:

- ☐ Sensitivity to light
- ☐ Sensitivity to sound
- ☐ Nausea or upset stomach
- ☐ Dizziness or imbalance
- ☐ Ear fullness or pressure
- ☐ Ringing in the ears
- ☐ Facial pressure or pain
- ☐ Nasal congestion or stuffiness
- ☐ Headache or head pressure
- ☐ Symptoms that come and go

Do your symptoms tend to worsen with:

- | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ Stress | ☐ Poor sleep | ☐ Dehydration |
| ☐ Skipped meals | ☐ Weather changes | ☐ Other: _____ |

CONNECT THE DOTS

The pattern matters more than any single symptom.

Migraine does not always look like a classic severe headache. For some people, ear, facial, nasal, or balance symptoms may be part of the picture.

Could this be migraine?

Migraine is more than a headache. It is a neurologic condition that can affect sensory pathways involved in the head and face.

That is one reason symptoms may be felt in places we typically associate with the ears or sinuses.

THE OVERLAP CAN LOOK DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE

EAR

- Fullness or pressure
- Sound sensitivity
- Tinnitus
- Dizziness

FACE & SINUSES

- Facial pressure
- Pressure around the eyes
- Nasal congestion or stuffiness
- "Sinus headache"

HEAD & SENSORY

- Headache or head pressure
- Light sensitivity
- Sound sensitivity
- Nausea

Why this can be confusing

Ear and sinus disorders can cause many of the same symptoms. Having these symptoms does not automatically mean migraine.

CONNECT THE DOTS

The goal is clarity, not a label.

The next step is to determine whether there is an ENT problem, a migraine pattern, another cause, or sometimes more than one thing happening at the same time.

What should I do next?

Ear fullness, facial or sinus pressure, and headache can have more than one possible cause. The next step is not to choose a diagnosis yourself, but to bring the pattern into focus.

1

START WITH THE SYMPTOMS

Tell your physician what you feel, where you feel it, how often it happens, and what seems to make it better or worse.

2

LOOK FOR WHAT FITS — AND WHAT DOESN'T

An ear or sinus evaluation may identify a clear ENT problem. If the findings do not fully explain your symptoms, migraine or another cause may also deserve consideration.

3

REMEMBER: IT MAY BE MORE THAN ONE THING

ENT conditions and migraine are not mutually exclusive. Sometimes more than one process can contribute to the symptoms you are experiencing.

A useful conversation with your physician might start with:

"These are the symptoms I keep noticing, and this is the pattern I'm seeing. Could there be more than one explanation for what I'm experiencing?"

YOUR NEXT STEP

Bring the pattern with you.

Use the next page to organize the details you want to discuss at your appointment.

Your Next Appointment Notes

Use this page to organize the details you want to discuss with your physician.

MY MOST IMPORTANT SYMPTOMS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

MY PATTERN

When did this start? _____

How often does it happen? _____

What seems to trigger or worsen it? _____

What seems to make it better? _____

WHAT I'VE ALREADY TRIED

What I tried

Response

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Helped | ☐ Somewhat | ☐ No change |
| ☐ Helped | ☐ Somewhat | ☐ No change |
| ☐ Helped | ☐ Somewhat | ☐ No change |

QUESTIONS I WANT TO ASK MY PHYSICIAN

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Want to keep connecting the dots?

I share physician-developed education about the overlap between persistent ear, facial and sinus symptoms, headache, and migraine.

Stay tuned for additional emails, resources, and educational opportunities.

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EDUCATIONAL DISCLAIMER

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