In recent years, the headaches worsened, requiring visits to the doctor for pain injections and trips to the emergency department. Over nine months last year, they became unbearable. After one of her worst headaches sent her to the emergency department again, Malcom went to the Headache Center at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas.

**DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT**
Malcom’s story isn’t unusual, says George Nissan, DO, an internal medicine physician on the medical staff at the Headache Center. “Some folks can tolerate a lot of pain before they seek help,” he says. “But they may be doing themselves a disservice. There is a lot we can do to prevent migraines and a number of non-narcotic ways to treat the pain when it happens.”

Migraines are just one type of headache that can affect quality of life. Other forms include cluster headaches and simple chronic daily headaches. Finding the right treatment can be as much art as science, because it can be difficult to identify the cause.

The Headache Center takes a multidisciplinary approach. In addition to conventional drug therapies for prevention and symptom management, physicians on the medical staff can use a full range of alternative therapies, including biofeedback, Botox injections, meditation and group therapy. As part of the Baylor Neuroscience Center, the Headache Center is fully equipped to diagnose more serious underlying conditions, of which headaches themselves might be a symptom.

**PINPOINTING THE PROBLEM**
The biggest factors in migraines are heredity, lifestyle and hormones, Dr. Nissan says. That’s why the first order of business for new patients is to explore their medical and health histories, lifestyles and experiences with headaches. MRIs, bloodwork and, rarely, lumbar punctures also may be part of the diagnostic process.

At the Headache Center, Malcom learned that she had been experiencing a common side effect of prolonged self-treatment of migraines: rebound headaches from over-the-counter medicine.

On her doctor’s advice, she stopped taking her pain medication and underwent a weeklong regimen of infusion therapy to break the cycle. She admits it was tough at first, but it worked. Now she takes preventive medication, and the migraines are few and far between. When the headaches do develop, she says, her rescue medication knocks them out.

As she describes the relief she felt on the fourth day of therapy, when the migraine finally broke, her voice is tinged with emotion. “It was like somebody turned the lights on for me,” she says. “I didn’t realize how much peripheral vision I’d lost. The world became much bigger again, in more ways than one.”

**IS IT ALZHEIMER’S? URGE YOUR LOVED ONE TO FIND OUT**
Could someone you care about be showing signs of Alzheimer’s? Claudia Padilla, MD, a behavioral neurologist on the medical staff at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas, has tips for persuading a loved one to get checked out.

**Have a plan.** “Approach your loved one in a calm, comfortable and supportive environment, be positive and choose your words carefully,” Dr. Padilla says.

**Share your concerns.** “It can be helpful to keep a journal of concerning events that happen over time, and then share it with your loved one to explain your concern,” she says.

**Show them the signs.** If your loved one is dismissing symptoms as just part of getting older, share the early signs and symptoms with them (BSWHealth.com/AlzheimersSigns).

**Offer to go to the appointment.** “Many times, the support of a loved one is enough to give someone the courage to get tested,” she says. “Make it less daunting by adding an enjoyable outing after the appointment, like lunch at a favorite restaurant.”

**Explain the benefits of treatment.** “Early detection allows individuals to begin treatment sooner, establish a care team and enroll in clinical trials,” Dr. Padilla says. “Getting tested earlier leads to a more accurate diagnosis and treatment.”

**Early Diagnosis and Treatment Are Best**
The Baylor AT&T Memory Center at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas has the resources and support for people experiencing Alzheimer’s. Visit BSWHealth.com/MemoryCenter for information and to schedule an appointment.