

Fibromyalgia

Overview

√ Definition

Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FM or FMS) is a common and disabling disorder affecting up to 15% of the population, women more often than men. Patients with fibromyalgia usually ache all over, sleep poorly, are stiff on waking, and are tired all day.

√ Causes

The root cause of fibromyalgia is unknown but some areas being investigated are

- Sleep disturbances
- Lack of exercise
- Microtrauma to muscles
- Chemical imbalances
- Emotional states
- Viral exposure
- Nutritional deficiencies

√ Treatments

Studies show that 70% of sufferers have significant improvement in pain symptoms and functional capacity if the syndrome is identified early and the patient is well motivated. Programs should focus on:

- Modalities to reduce pain
- Instruction in posture
- Manipulation to restore proper biomechanics
- Stretching and exercises
- Stress reduction
- Lifestyle changes to improve sleep
- Naturopathic techniques
- Massage—conventional
- Massage—cranial sacral
- Appropriate pharmaceuticals
- Nutritional/dietary adjustments
- Psychological therapy
- Acupuncture

Resources

√ Organizations

American Fibromyalgia Syndrome Association www.afsafund.org

This site focuses on research, education and patient advocacy.

Arthritis Foundation www.arthritis.org

One of the most useful sites for fibromyalgia patients. Contains educational materials. Membership in the Arthritis Foundation includes a newsletter identifying support groups, classes, and exercise programs in your area.

Fibromyalgia Network. www.fmnetnews.com

This site is educational and informational, containing a newsletter, doctor referrals, support group referrals, abstracts, surveys, and web links.

MEDLINE Plus www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/fibromyalgia.html

Sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, this excellent site provides detailed information about the syndrome and up-to-date research.

Healing Well.Com www.healingwell.com

This site contains first-person, informative articles by fibromyalgia patients, multiple chat rooms, and a bookstore.

Job Accommodations Network <http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu>

Good information about reasonable accommodation ideas for people with chronic pain. Limitations vary among individuals, and many solutions and considerations exist.

√ Books

Your Personal Guide to Living Well with Fibromyalgia: An official publication of the Arthritis Foundation. Atlanta, Georgia. Longstreet Press, Inc., 1997

The Fibromyalgia Survivor. By Mark Pellegrino, Columbus, OH: Anadem Publishing, 1995

When Muscle Pain Won't Go Away: The Relief Handbook for Fibromyalgia and Chronic Muscle Pain. By Gayle Backstrom with Bernard R. Rubin. Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Co., 1995

Doctor, Why Do I Hurt So Much? By M. Greenburg and L. Frank. Minneapolis, MN: DCI/Chronimed Publishing, 1992

Laugh at Your Muscles. By Mark Pellegrino, Columbus, OH: Anadem Publishing Inc., 1993