

# FIBROMYALGIA SYMPTOMS

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## FATIGUE

Chronic fatigue is one of the most common symptoms and can be both crippling and exhausting.



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## HEADACHES

Recurrent migraine or tension-type headaches occur in nearly 70 percent of fibromyalgia sufferers.



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## MEMORY ISSUES

Short-term memory problems and overall memory loss can be a product of fibromyalgia.



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## SLEEP DISORDERS

Most fibromyalgia sufferers don't get restorative sleep, and many suffer from insomnia, less deep sleep, restless leg syndrome and even sleep apnea.



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## CRAMPING IN THE LOWER ABDOMEN

Constipation, diarrhea, abdominal pain, gas and bloating, irritable bowel, and nausea happens with roughly half of fibromyalgia patients.



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## DEPRESSION

Constant fatigue and muscle weakness often isolates one socially, and depression is a common end result.



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## ANXIETY

Dealing with chronic pain creates a high level of stress and makes every day more difficult, hence anxiety about the future and in general affects some.



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## FIBRO FOG

The wicked combination of exhaustion, muscle fatigue and memory issues can make one feel like she's walking around in a "fog."



## FIBROMYALGIA



**Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition of widespread pain and profound fatigue.**

The pain tends to be felt as diffuse aching or burning, often described as head to toe. It may be worse at some times than at others. It may also change location, usually becoming more severe in parts of the body that are used most.



## **SYMPTOMS**

As well as widespread pain, people with fibromyalgia may also have; increased sensitivity to pain, fatigue, muscle stiffness, difficulty sleeping, problems with mental process (fibro-fog) such as problems with memory and concentration, headaches and IBS.

## **TREATMENT**

There is currently no cure for fibromyalgia however there are treatments to help relieve some of the symptoms and make the condition easier to live with. Treatment may consist of medication such as antidepressants and painkillers, talking therapies such as CBT or counselling and lifestyle changes such as exercise programmes and relaxation techniques.

## **WHAT CAUSES FIBROMYALGIA?**

The exact cause of fibromyalgia is unknown, but it's thought to be related to abnormal levels of certain chemicals in the brain and changes in the way the central nervous system (brain, spinal cord and nerves) processes pain messages carried around the body.

It's also suggested that some people are more likely to develop fibromyalgia because of genes inherited from their parents.

In many cases, the condition appears to be triggered by a physically or emotionally stressful event.

## **WHO DOES IT AFFECT?**

Anyone can develop fibromyalgia, although it affects around 7 times as many women as men.

The condition typically develops between the ages of 30 and 50, but can occur in people of any age, including children and the elderly. It's not clear exactly how many people are affected by fibromyalgia, although research has suggested it could be a relatively common condition. Some estimates suggest nearly 1 in 20 people may be affected by fibromyalgia to some degree. One of the main reasons it's not clear how many people are affected is because fibromyalgia can be a difficult condition to diagnose.

## **SUPPORT**

Many people with fibromyalgia find that support groups provide

an important network where they can talk to others living with the condition.

Fibromyalgia Action UK is a charity that offers information and support to people with fibromyalgia.

If you have any questions about fibromyalgia, call the charity's helpline on 0300 999 3333.

## **PACING YOURSELF**

If you have fibromyalgia, it's important to pace yourself. This means balancing periods of activity with periods of rest, and not overdoing it or pushing yourself beyond your limits.

If you do not pace yourself, it could slow down your progress in the long term.

Over time, you can gradually increase your periods of activity while making sure they're balanced with periods of rest.

If you have fibromyalgia, you'll probably have some days when your symptoms are better than others.

## **WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE**

To book onto a seminar

Please phone the pain admin team on 01803 654270 to book a place.

After you have attended the seminar (s) of your choice, you will then be given the opportunity to book onto a 'Moving Forward with Fibromyalgia Workshop' where you can learn more about the services available from our team.

If you have any questions about this pathway please contact Mr Andy Howell, Moving Forward with Fibromyalgia representative. Please phone 01803 654270 or email [sdhct.painmanagement@nhs.net](mailto:sdhct.painmanagement@nhs.net).