

INFORMATION

From Your Family Doctor

Information for Patients Living With Fibromyalgia

What is fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia (FI-bro-my-AL-juh) is a common condition that causes pain in muscles, joints, ligaments, and tendons. People with fibromyalgia often feel tired and stiff. They may also have trouble sleeping and may feel depressed. The symptoms of fibromyalgia can be different in every person who has it. Fibromyalgia isn't life-threatening, but it doesn't go away completely.

What causes fibromyalgia?

The cause of fibromyalgia appears to be abnormal processing of pain signals by the brain and nervous system.

How does my doctor know I have fibromyalgia?

No tests can prove you have fibromyalgia. Tests come back normal, even though you still hurt. The diagnosis is likely when the symptoms you have fit the right pattern, but no other cause is found. When your doctor examines you, you may have tender spots in your muscles and skin. You also may feel very tired and sleep poorly.

How is fibromyalgia treated?

You and your doctor must work together to treat your fibromyalgia. Treatment should help ease your

symptoms, but there is no cure. Your doctor may prescribe medicine to help you sleep and to reduce your pain. Good nutrition and regular sleep and exercise often help. Low-impact aerobic exercise like swimming or stationary bicycling can help you feel better. You and your doctor can decide which types of exercise are best for you. Exercise might make your pain worse at first. If you do it regularly, though, it usually helps. Try not to exercise too hard. If you do too much on days that you feel good, you might end up feeling worse.

With medicine and exercise, some people have found help in support groups. Others prefer counseling or therapy. You and your doctor can decide what treatment will help you make your day-to-day life better.

For more information:

Your doctor

Arthritis Foundation
<http://www.arthritis.org>

Fibromyalgia Network
<http://www.fmnetnews.com>

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