

Fibromyalgia (Fibrositis)

by Dr. John Snyder

WHAT IS FIBROMYALGIA?

Fibromyalgia is a common condition associated with widespread aching, stiffness, fatigue, and sleep disturbance. Other common symptoms include tension or migraine headaches, dizziness, tingling or numbness in the hands and feet, gastrointestinal problems, urinary frequency, and painful menstrual periods in women. Although these symptoms do occur in fibromyalgia patients, a more serious problem could be causing some of these symptoms. It is best to seek professional help if



you are affected by any of these problems. Three almost universal symptoms associated with this disorder are sleep disturbance, fatigue and depression (in about 30% of all patients). If these are not present, most likely fibromyalgia is not the problem.

CAUSE

The cause of fibromyalgia is unknown. The most common theories are disruptive sleep patterns, psychological stress, immune or endocrine abnormalities, or altered serotonin levels in the central nervous system. Fibromyalgia is closely associated with chronic fatigue syndrome and it is difficult to differentiate between the two.

TREATMENT

Although there is no cure for fibromyalgia several treatments are commonly used,

including: Central nervous system medications, nerve blocks, biofeedback, hypnotherapy, acupuncture, cardiovascular fitness training, and muscle therapy/rehabilitation. Antidepressants are also used however, effectiveness appears to decrease over time.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

What it means is there are a lot of people thrown into this category of having fibromyalgia that has no known cause and no proven cure. A lot of these people may have been misdiagnosed with fibromyalgia and may have a more serious problem or a less serious problem that can be cured.

MYOFACIAL PAIN SYNDROME VS. FIBROMYALGIA

Myofascial pain syndrome does have a known cause and a known cure. Symptoms associated with myofascial pain syndrome are general achiness and pain, fatigue and sleep disturbance (caused by general pain), tension and migraine headaches, tingling in hands and feet, and dizziness. Myofascial pain syndrome may also mimic carpal tunnel and sciatica. Myofascial pain syndrome is a muscular disorder usually caused by previous trauma, repetitive movements, previous illness or lack of activity. Various trigger points can produce all of the mentioned symptoms and may be the cause of your problem.

WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

If you have been diagnosed with fibromyalgia and you are not satisfied with the diagnosis or treatment plan you should seek a second opinion or third or fourth until you find a plan that works for you. Don't give up, there is help out there.

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