

Fibromyalgia



What Is Fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia is a condition that causes pain and tender muscles. It can also cause a range of other symptoms. The exact cause of fibromyalgia is unknown. It is most common in women and may occur with other chronic conditions. Fibromyalgia does not cause damage to your joints or muscles. It also does not shorten your lifespan.



What Are the Warning Signs of Fibromyalgia?

- Extreme tiredness
- Tenderness and pain all over the body
- Morning stiffness
- Trouble sleeping
- Discomfort in the legs when trying to fall asleep (restless legs syndrome)
- Headaches
- Numbness or tingling in feet and hands
- Painful menstrual periods
- Problems with concentration and memory



How Is Fibromyalgia Diagnosed?

There are no tests that diagnose fibromyalgia. The symptoms of fibromyalgia can be seen with many other conditions. Because of this, a doctor must first rule out other conditions. A doctor can make a diagnosis based on the following:

- History of pain all over the body lasting more than 3 months
- Other symptoms, like feeling tired even after sleeping, and memory or concentration problems



How Is Fibromyalgia Treated?

There are many different ways to treat fibromyalgia symptoms. Treatment can include medicines to help with pain, antidepressant medicines, and relaxation techniques. The goal is to improve your symptoms so that they are less of a problem in everyday life. Things you can do to feel better include:

- Getting enough sleep
- Creating an exercise plan with your doctor
- Eating well
- Managing stress
- Taking medicine as prescribed
- Seeing a physical therapist

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Questions for My Doctor

- Does fibromyalgia run in families?
- Will my pain get better with time?
- Are there options besides medicine to help manage my symptoms?
- Will certain foods or exercise help?
- Can I still do the things I like?
- How long will I have this illness?
- Can alternative treatments help with my symptoms?



Bottom Line

- Fibromyalgia is a condition that causes muscle pain and tenderness all over the body. It also makes you feel very tired, even after sleep.
- Symptoms include feeling very tired, pain, trouble sleeping, mood changes, headaches, and trouble concentrating.
- Your doctor must first rule out other possible causes of your symptoms before diagnosing you. There is no test to diagnose fibromyalgia.
- Treatment is focused on helping your symptoms so that they do not affect your daily activities. There are lifestyle changes and medications that can help you with your symptoms.

For More Information

- **MedlinePlus:** www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/fibromyalgia.html
- **National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases:** www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/Fibromyalgia/
- **American College of Rheumatology:** www.rheumatology.org/Practice/Clinical/Patients/Diseases_And_Conditions/Fibromyalgia/

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