

FIBROMYALGIA

Fibromyalgia, formally known as “fibrositis,” is a common problem that can cause aches and stiffness all over the body. Common complaints are generalized muscle pain and fatigue. It does not cause crippled joints. Fibromyalgia causes sore spots on the neck, back, hips, knees, or elbows—“trigger points.” We do not know why some people get fibromyalgia but we can help with the pain.

Who gets fibromyalgia?

Anyone can have fibromyalgia. Most common in young and middle-aged women. It can get worse from stress, worry, illness, or lack of sleep.

Symptoms

1. Pain—most prominent symptom. Felt all over. Described as burning, radiating, gnawing, sore, stiff, and aching.
2. Fatigue and Sleep Disturbances—90% of people with fibromyalgia have fatigue, lack of energy, decrease exercise endurance, and wake up feeling tired.
3. Headaches—muscle tension and migraines.
4. GI disturbances—Abdominal pain, bloating, and alternating constipation and diarrhea (irritable bowel or “spastic colon”).
5. Urinary—bladder spasms cause urinary urgency and frequency.

How do you know if you have fibromyalgia?

If you have pain that does not get better, see your doctor. There is no special laboratory test or x-ray. Sometimes it is caused by another disease. Your doctor may do some tests to help decide if you have another disease that can be treated.

What can be done about it?

Fibromyalgia cannot be cured, but you can get help with the pain. Treatment may include educational programs, exercise, physical therapy, relaxation techniques, meditation, and medicine to help with the symptoms.

Fibromyalgia is a real cause of chronic pain and fatigue and must be treated as a chronic illness. But remember, it is NOT life threatening and does NOT cause deformity. You will have good days and bad days.