

Fibromyalgia & Chronic Fatigue

It is estimated that 2 to 4 percent of the U.S. population has fibromyalgia and nine out of 10 sufferers are women. To make matters worse, fibromyalgia is often accompanied by Chronic fatigue.

The word "fibromyalgia" means "muscle pain". A diagnosis of Fibromyalgia can often be somewhat vague and the causes are varied and complex. Usually the diagnosis is subjective, based on the patient's complaints -- the most common one being hypersensitivity to pain.

Signs and Symptoms of Fibromyalgia

One of the most important criteria to determine a diagnosis of fibromyalgia is significant pain in very specific areas of the body, including:

- Inside of the elbows
- The collar bones
- Inside of the knees
- The hips

Usually these locations are symmetrical, so pain is equally present on both sides of the body. If significant pain is experienced when someone presses on those areas on both sides of the body, fibromyalgia is indicated.

People also frequently report pain all over their bodies -- including in the muscles, ligaments and tendons. The pain is often accompanied by a feeling of exhaustion, as well as a variety of other debilitating conditions, such as:

- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Depression
- Ringing of the ears (tinnitus)
- Headaches

Another major indication of fibromyalgia is some type of significant sleep disturbance.

The typical treatment strategy offered by a conventional physician is some form of pain medication and perhaps a psychotropic drug such as antidepressants. I don't recommend either of these because they do not address the cause of the problem. Many fibromyalgia sufferers do not respond to conventional painkillers anyway, which can set in motion a vicious cycle of overmedicating on these dangerous drugs.

Where To Look for the Cause

Because fibromyalgia is really an expression of a number of body functions gone wrong rather than a straightforward illness in itself, we have to look at several body systems to find what the cause may be in a particular case. This includes looking at the following:

Thyroid function

Hypothyroid in particular is a very common factor. Almost 10% of the US population, mostly women, are affected. Hashimoto's Hypothyroid (an autoimmune disease) is the most common cause of hypothyroid in the United States.

Adrenal function

Weak adrenal glands are often involved with fibromyalgia. Functional hypoadrenia is extremely common with Americans because of chronic stress and poor eating habits. The adrenals help maintain normal blood sugar levels and produce natural anti-inflammatory hormones that help to control pain.

Digestive system integrity and allergies

Many people with fibromyalgia have food allergies to wheat, corn, dairy, citrus, soy and nuts. If the small intestine lining is too thin, these food particles can “leak” into the blood stream to cause an allergic reaction.

Immune function

A weak immune system may allow chronic, subclinical infections involving viruses, bacteria and parasites. These may all contribute to fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue. Unless the immune system is strengthened and boosted, these infections will persist causing chronic problems that can extend to other body areas. Part of the treatment for fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue is to boost the immune system to the point of eliminating infections including viruses, bacteria, parasites and molds.

Hormonal balance

Because 90% of fibromyalgia victims are women, it is important to evaluate hormonal balance. Estrogen / progesterone balance is important for many reasons. Few women have the normal ratio of estrogen to progesterone which is 1:30. A hormonal imbalance may be due to an improperly functioning liver. Many environmental factors, including contaminants in food and water, overexposure to plastics, and some beauty products (especially creams), contain hormones or chemicals that mimic hormones that are easily absorbed into the body, resulting in toxic overload. Unfortunately the FDA does not require the manufactures to include hormones in the labeling, so it is hard to know whether or not they are in the lotions or creams.

Laboratory testing and analysis are needed to evaluate these systems and glands. A proper physical examination and detailed medical history are also needed to reveal problems. Many times a patient with fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome will be told their blood tests are normal. “Normal” lab ranges are not optimal physiological ranges. Many of the tests are misinterpreted and significant clues are missed. All of these systems must be evaluated as more often than not there are multiple factors contributing to fibromyalgia.

Dr. Bruce West states that about 30% of those afflicted with fibromyalgia will improve significantly just by discontinuing the use of synthetic vitamins.

Vitamin D deficiency and a diet high in refined carbohydrates also may contribute to fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue.

Fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue are serious health problems. They are like a really good vacuum cleaner, they suck the life right out of you!!! The good news is there are natural, effective, nondrug therapies to help restore normal function and vitality.

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