

# Pain Solutions

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## Fibromyalgia



### What is Fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia describes a muscle disorder characterized by widespread aching that lasts for more than three months. Tender points are found on both sides of the body, and the pain is usually continuous. There may be day-to-day fluctuations in intensity that shift from one area of the body to another. More and more people suffer from this mysterious disease each year.

### What are the risk factors?

- **Gender** - occurs more often in women than in men
- **Age** - tends to develop during early and middle adulthood
- **Disturbing sleep patterns** - it is unclear whether sleeping difficulties are a cause or the result of fibromyalgia. However, people with sleep disorders such as night time muscle spasms, restless leg syndrome, or sleep apnea often have fibromyalgia
- **Family history** - you may be more likely to develop fibromyalgia if a relative also has the condition
- **Rheumatic disease** - if you have a rheumatic disease, such as rheumatoid arthritis or lupus, you may be more likely to develop fibromyalgia

### What are the symptoms?

- Deep muscle pain
- Morning stiffness
- Sleep problems
- Memory problems
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Anxiety
- Depression

### What can control the symptoms?

- Cardiovascular fitness
- Control of mental stress
- Biofeedback training
- Consistent sleep patterns
- Development of self-management skills
- Occasional trigger point injections into specific tense muscles
- Take medications only as prescribed
- Relaxation techniques
- Low-dose antidepressants
- Limit exercise
- Limit stress

### What are the symptoms?

Many people who suffer from fibromyalgia may also have:

- Depression
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- Restless Leg Syndrome
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)
- Headaches
- Lupus
- Osteoarthritis
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Endometriosis

### What are my treatment options?

#### Medications

**Antidepressants** - very helpful in relieving fibromyalgia pain & improving deep restorative sleep. They work by balancing serotonin & other brain chemicals.

**Anticonvulsants** - developed to treat seizures and help relieve many types of pain. Lyrica®, an anticonvulsant, was the first medication approved by the FDA specifically for fibromyalgia pain.

**Analgesics** - Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) may ease the pain and stiffness caused by fibromyalgia

#### Injections

**Trigger point** - local injections of analgesics and/or cortisone medication into the trigger-point areas can also be helpful in relieving painful soft tissues

**Botox** - blocks neuromuscular transmission and can relieve pain and spasms

#### Therapy

**Physical therapy** - specific exercises can help restore muscle balance and may reduce pain

**Counseling** - teaches you methods for dealing with stressful situations and may help you manage your fibromyalgia

