



FMSupport South East Essex Group

Working with the Fibromyalgia Association UK (registered charity 1042682), we offer support and information, via our website and by holding regular meetings for those effected by Fibromyalgia in the South & South East of Essex

For further information on the Group visit our website www.foxiefibro.co.uk



FIBROMYALGIA - COMMON SYMPTOMS

There are no two fibromites the same, we are all individuals but we do share some common symptoms

CHRONIC GENERALISED PAIN

Fibromyalgia is classified as a syndrome. The chief complaint of fibromyalgia is pain. The pain can cause functional limitations varying from mild to incapacitating. This pain is in the muscles, tendons, ligaments, bursa, and sometimes feels as if it is in the joints. This is mostly related to pain at the muscle and tendon insertions into the joint area and is not a reflection of actual joint pathology or inflammation. The pain may be described as a constant ache or throbbing.

Typical pain locations include the head, neck, shoulders (especially between shoulder blades), lower back, and hip muscles. Chest pain can be a problem especially for large busted women. Certain areas may cause sharp, stabbing pain, and these areas are sensitive to touch. The body's process of monitoring pain, recording pain, and expressing pain is an energy consuming process that involves nerves, neurotransmitters and other various enzymes and hormones.

Most of the time, there is no clear reason why the pain occurs; that is, there has been no specific illness or trauma. In one third or more of fibromyalgia cases, some type of event, either an injury like whiplash or sometimes a viral illness such as a flu like illness, precipitated the fibromyalgia condition. Usually the pain begins in one location, such as the shoulder, but over time it begins to involve more and more other areas until it is no longer localised, but rather generalised throughout the body.

Pain may wander to different sites; the lower back may be sore one day, and then the next day the neck hurts. These wandering symptoms may lead you to think you are losing your mind. Fibromyalgia, indeed, causes wandering pain.

A person in constant pain will use up more energy and have less stored energy than a person without constant pain. Studies have shown that muscles with fibromyalgia do not use oxygen as well as normal muscles. Lack of oxygen usually sends a signal of pain.





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JOINT PAIN

Joint pain and stiffness are usually found in those with fibromyalgia. This is mostly related to pain at the muscle and tendon insertions into the Joint area and is not a reflection of actual joint pathology or inflammation.

HEADACHES

Fibromyalgia sufferers often experience headaches - there are many different triggers for them, often other conditions related or possibly related to fibromyalgia, including:

- **Tension/migraine headaches** (most people with fibromyalgia have these).
Tension headaches are called muscle contraction headaches. They usually begin at the base of the neck and extend upward to the temples forming a band-like squeezing headache. Migraine headaches are vascular in origin. Some event triggers blood vessels to the brain to constrict and then dilate leading to severe headaches. Nausea, vomiting, eye pain, and other symptoms may also be associated with headaches.
- **Temporomandibular Joint or TMJ dysfunction.**
This causes jaw pain, dizziness, and "head" pain, a common associated condition of fibromyalgia.
- **Post-concussive syndrome**
Residual headaches, neck pain, and/or difficulty concentrating after a concussion, often part of post-traumatic fibromyalgia and severe whiplash injury.
- **Allergy flare-up with congestion or cold symptoms**
In the USA some of the medical professionals believe that allergies are more common in people with fibromyalgia. This is not the case with the UK medical professionals, they believe that there is insufficient evidence to substantiate this claim.
- **Referred pain**
From tender/trigger points in neck and shoulder areas.
- **Side effects from medications**
Medicines used to treat fibromyalgia for example; tricyclic antidepressants, beta-blockers, migraine headache medications, and muscle relaxers.
- **Hormonal changes in women**
Women with fibromyalgia commonly experience headaches as part of the pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS) or menopause.
- **Dry eye syndrome**
Common in fibromyalgia may cause eye irritation and headaches.
- **Eye strain**
Fibromyalgia pain and fatigue in eye muscles cause headaches.





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OTHER SYMPTOMS CAN INCLUDE:

- irritable bowel/bladder
- depression/ anxiety
- hypermobility (especially in younger people)
- rhinitis, other allergies and possibly sinus infection
- panic attacks
- tinnitus (ringing in ears)
- low-frequency hearing loss
- weight change (gain)
- night sweats
- heart palpitations

This symptoms guide, prepared for and by fibromyalgia sufferers, is no substitute for proper medical investigation and formal diagnosis. If you believe you may have fibromyalgia, speak to your GP who may refer you to a rheumatologist or other specialist/consultant.

