



Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia is a debilitating muscle disease. It can cause severe pain and may impair deep sleep. It is a stress-related autoimmune disorder and many of the symptoms mimic those of chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) and rheumatoid arthritis.

Symptoms of fibromyalgia include painful, tender and recurrent aches in various points all over the body. There is a persistent but diffuse pain in the structural system (bones and muscles), accompanied by fatigue, headaches, general weakness, irritable bowel, poor sleep patterns, digestive problems, and nervous system problems (depression and anxiety). It is typically diagnosed by pain and stiffness in specific "tender points" where the muscles are abnormally tender to the touch.

Although it is labeled as untreatable and incurable, it has been aided by natural remedies. For starters, there are some general remedies that should be considered for any autoimmune disorder. Food allergies may be a factor in autoimmune disorders, so start by avoiding foods that are incompatible with one's blood type. Some common foods that aggravate autoimmune conditions include hydrogenated fats and oils (shortening, margarine, etc.), grains (especially corn and wheat), and dairy products. Digestive enzymes are also very important. Proactazyme or Protease Plus are good choices.

As with all autoimmune disorders, immune stimulants should be avoided. Herbs and supplements to avoid include echinacea, golden seal, yarrow, dandelion root, Colostrum Plus, Nature's Immune Stimulator and Trigger Immune. With essential oils, avoid ylang ylang, geranium and thyme.

The adrenals produce cortisol, a hormone that dampens the immune response and keeps inflammation under control. The corticosteroid drugs used to treat autoimmune disorders like fibromyalgia are mimics of cortisol. Herbs that exhibit a cortisol-like action can be helpful here. Licorice root not only supports the adrenals, it has anti-inflammatory and antiviral actions of its own. Yucca also mimics the effect of cortisol and reduces inflammation. It also has a detoxifying and blood thinning action. Wild yam is anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic. Chinese Mineral Chi Tonic also has some of this immune-modulating activity and contains herbs that help the adrenals. It has proven very helpful in many cases of fibromyalgia.

Stress negatively impacts the adrenal glands and adversely affects autoimmune disorders. Stress management is very important in dealing with fibromyalgia. In addition to stress management techniques such as meditation, adequate sleep, positive mental attitude and relaxation techniques, supplements that help the body manage stress such as adaptagens (Eluthero Root, Chinese Mineral Chi Tonic, and Suma Combination)

and Nutri-Calm will be helpful. Distress Remedy can also help reduce stressful responses in difficult situations.

Antioxidants will also help to balance immune activity. Green tea extract and High Potency Grape are appropriate choices for autoimmune disorders. Black walnut is an immune modulating herb that is particularly helpful for fibromyalgia.

The right kind of essential fatty acids can also help modulate the immune response. In particular Omega-3 essential fatty acids help reduce inflammatory responses. Flax Seed Oil or Omega-3 EPA are good sources of these essential fatty acids.

Heavy metal poisoning and toxicity are major underlying factors in fibromyalgia. Vaccines, which introduce mercury and other toxins directly into the blood stream, have been implicated by some natural healers. Gentle detoxification is needed so as to not stir up these toxins too quickly. SAM-e helps in liver detoxification and has helped some cases of fibromyalgia. Enviro-Detox can be helpful when taken in small doses (one capsule per day) to promote gentle detoxification.

Magnesium deficiency is probably a major factor in this disorder. Muscles go into spasm when they are exhausted, so increasing energy production in the cells is important. Fibralgia is a combination of malic acid and magnesium, which helps increase energy in muscle cells and enables them to relax. Cellular Energy is another alternative for increasing energy production and helping muscles to relax. Kava kava, black cohosh and lobelia are all antispasmodic herbs that can also help reduce muscle cramping and pain.

Candida or yeast infections may also be a contributing factor in autoimmune conditions. Avoid refined sugars and carbohydrates as these feed yeast. Probiotics can also help normalize gut reactions and reduce allergic responses.

Moderate exercise is also helpful, especially exercise that helps stretch muscles. Yoga, tai chi and other flowing martial arts and dance disciplines, hiking, walking, swimming and light bicycle riding are good choices. It's very important not to overdo on exercise and stress the body! Hard aerobics and intense team sports are out.

It is important to work with a knowledgeable natural health consultant when dealing with a serious condition like fibromyalgia *so that the program can be tailored to one's individual needs.* For personal assistance contact the person listed below. You can also consult the book *Fibromyalgia: A Journey Toward Healing* by Chanchal Cabrera, AHG, for more information. This reference provides detailed information on natural therapies for fibromyalgia by an experienced clinical herbalist.

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