About the NFA

The National Fibromyalgia Association is the oldest and largest nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing and decreasing the burden of fibromyalgia through education, research and patient advocacy. The NFA leads a national and international effort to create a voice for FM providers, researchers and patients. Efforts include the development and support of educational activities, awareness events, fibromyalgia research, media coverage, and the facilitation of increased collaboration efforts between patients and providers. Visit its award-winning website at www.FMaware.org for more information.

You will become stronger than you ever imagined.
Your heart will expand with compassion.
You will find true friends who will be your support.
Your priorities will focus on life’s real purpose.
Your new world will provide endless opportunities.
You will find comfort in balance and patience.
Your resilience will intensify.
... And you will be nourished by the power of faith.

The NFA’s mission is to develop and execute programs dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with fibromyalgia.

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Serving the Fibromyalgia Community Since 1997

For Everyone Affected by Fibromyalgia

www.FMaware.org
What is Fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia (pronounced fy-bro-my-AL-ja) is a complex chronic pain disorder that causes widespread body pain. Other common symptoms include: moderate to severe fatigue, sleep disorders, problems with cognitive functioning, irritable bowel syndrome, headaches and migraines, restless legs syndrome (periodic limb movement disorder), impaired memory and concentration, skin sensitivities and rashes, dry eyes and mouth, anxiety, depression, ringing in the ears, dizziness, vision problems, Raynaud’s Syndrome, neurological symptoms, and impaired coordination.

Prevalence

Fibromyalgia (FM) is one of the most common chronic pain conditions. The disorder affects an estimated 5 million people in the U.S. and an estimated 2% of the world population. While it is most prevalent in women—75-90% of the people who have FM are women—it also occurs in men and children of all ethnic groups. The disorder is often seen in families, among siblings or mothers and their children. The diagnosis is usually made between the ages of 20 to 50 years, but the incidence rises with age, so that by age 80, approximately 8% of adults meet the American College of Rheumatology classification of fibromyalgia.

Symptoms

- Chronic widespread musculoskeletal pain
- Moderate to extreme fatigue
- Sleep disturbances
- Sensitivity to touch, light, and sound
- Cognitive difficulties

Many individuals also experience a number of other symptoms and overlapping conditions, such as irritable bowel and bladder, headaches and migraines, restless legs syndrome (periodic limb movement disorder), impaired memory and concentration, skin sensitivities and rashes, dry eyes and mouth, anxiety, depression, ringing in the ears, dizziness, vision problems, Raynaud’s Syndrome, neurological symptoms, and impaired coordination.

Diagnosis

The fibromyalgia diagnostic criteria, established by the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) in 1990, includes a history of widespread pain in all four quadrants of the body for a minimum duration of three months, and pain in at least 11 of the 18 designated tender points when a specified amount of pressure is applied. New diagnostic criteria were developed by the ACR in 2010, which do not use tender points, but focus upon pain being widespread and accompanied by allied symptoms, such as sleep problems, problems with thinking clearly, and fatigue. Since people with FM tend to look healthy and conventional tests are typically normal, a physician knowledgeable about the disorder is necessary to make a diagnosis. Physicians should rule out other causes of the symptoms before making a diagnosis of fibromyalgia.

For those with severe symptoms, fibromyalgia can be extremely debilitating and interfere with basic daily activities.

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