

Fibromyalgia Facts For Females

Fibromyalgia is one of the most common diseases affecting the muscles, tendons, and joints in women. Many health care professionals still do not recognize the condition as a disorder, most likely, because x-rays, blood tests, and biopsies often show no prevalent evidence to support the patient's complaints. However, in recent years, the use of thermographs, a device that tests and measures the heat produced by areas of the body, has helped diagnose the condition.

Studies indicate that fibromyalgia patients have decreased blood flow and decreased skin temperatures in sites of tenderness. Symptoms include long-term muscle soreness, muscle stiffness, sleeplessness, fatigue, mood changes, anxiety and depression. Often times the condition is worsened by stress and weather changes. Unlike other rheumatic conditions that cause swelling and inflammation of the tissues in the body, fibromyalgia does not cause any type of joint deformity or does not damage any internal organs.

Many times, patients that suffer with fibromyalgia have other conditions or disorders that will occur. One of the most common disorders associated with fibromyalgia is TMJ, a disorder associated with the jaw. Many sufferers of fibromyalgia may be diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, as well. Some patients complain of migraine or tension headaches, irritable bowel and bladder syndromes. Some women may develop a loss in memory and concentration. Fibrocystic Breast Disease and Endometriosis is often present in women that have fibromyalgia, although there has been no studies conducted regarding the correlation of the two.

Causes of this condition is still unknown, many experts are researching the relationship between menopause and fibromyalgia. Most women are diagnosed with this condition between the ages of 40 to 55 which is when menopause usually occurs, and approximately 85%-90% of all reported Fibromyalgia conditions are women. Hormonal changes, such as the decreased amounts of estrogen in the female body, may contribute to symptoms like anxiety, depression, and sleeplessness in fibromyalgia patients. Research shows, however, that estrogen and progesterone replacement therapy is not that beneficial to fibromyalgia sufferers. There are mild benefits reported when using the estrogen patches rather than the estrogen pills. Some studies indicate that the low thyroid function and decreased levels of thyroid hormones, as well as estrogen and progesterone hormones, may contribute to muscular pain, fatigue, mood changes, and anxiety. At the present time the correlation between menopause and fibromyalgia is uncertain, due to the lack of research on the subject. Fortunately, more tests are being conducted to find out how declining estrogen levels affect the onset of fibromyalgia. On-going research is being conducted that may suggest abnormally low levels of the hormone Cortisol, which is the hormone produced by the adrenal gland may also be a linked cause.

Unfortunately, there is no way to prevent this disorder or completely cure it, either; Therefore, most treatment's center on conquering the symptoms associated with fibromyalgia. Treatments for women suffering from fibromyalgia vary according to symptoms. In some cases, physical therapy or light exercise may be prescribed. Research has shown that the use of ice immediately following any exercise may decrease muscle and joint pain. The use of tricyclic anti-depressants usually used in treating depression; has also been shown to be an effective medication for treating fibromyalgia. These medications usually relieve depression, anxiety, reduce fatigue, and restores effective sleep patterns. Some physicians may prescribe local injections of analgesics to the sore or stiff areas. The use of pain-relievers and muscle relaxers has both been beneficial in reducing pain symptoms and improving sleep. Often times, doctors will discuss pain and stress management to their patients; which can eliminate some symptoms of the disorder.

Diet plays an important role in the prevention of symptoms concerning fibromyalgia. Eating organic foods, such as fruits and vegetables; increasing the intake of low-fat, high fiber foods; those high in Omega-3 Fatty acids, found in fish may benefit sufferers. Some physicians suggest lowering sodium rich foods or eliminating additives such as monosodium glutamate (MSG's) and artificial sweeteners, like Aspartame may relieve many symptoms of fibromyalgia. And recent studies indicate the use of a vegan diet may help alleviate symptoms. Alternative treatments, specifically in the field of homeopathic remedies, suggest taking magnesium, B-12 Vitamins, and Vitamin C.

Other non-medical treatments involve massage therapy, heat therapy and cold packs that may temporarily relieve symptoms. The use of Hydrotherapy or water therapy can increase circulation and decrease muscle aches. Currently, there are studies being conducted that may offer more treatments or one specific treatment for helping relieve fibromyalgia symptoms.

Women suffering with this disorder may find themselves withdrawing from society due to the pain and anxiety associated with fibromyalgia. Many times, women find themselves unable to work a physical or stressful job. The best advice is to seek treatment and maintain a healthy lifestyle, which includes light exercise, good eating habits, and staying active in both, work and life.

About the Author

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