

Fibromyalgia: Care Instructions



Overview

Fibromyalgia is a painful condition that is not completely understood by medical experts. The cause of fibromyalgia is not known. It can make you feel tired and ache all over. It causes tender spots at specific points of the body that hurt only when you press on them. You may have trouble sleeping, as well as other symptoms. These problems can upset your work and home life.

Symptoms tend to come and go, although they may never go away completely. Fibromyalgia does not harm your muscles, joints, or organs.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Exercise often. Walk, swim, or bike to help with pain and sleep problems and to make you feel better.
- Try to get a good night's sleep. Go to bed and get up at the same time each day, whether you feel rested or not. Make sure you have a good mattress and pillow.
- Reduce stress. Avoid things that cause you stress, if you can. If not, work at making them less stressful. Learn to use biofeedback, guided imagery, meditation, or other methods to relax.

- Make healthy changes. Eat a balanced diet, quit smoking, and limit alcohol and caffeine.
- Use a heating pad set on low or take warm baths or showers for pain. Using cold packs for up to 20 minutes at a time can also relieve pain. Put a thin cloth between the cold pack and your skin. A gentle massage might help too.
- Be safe with medicines. Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine. Your doctor may talk to you about taking antidepressant medicines. These medicines may improve sleep, relieve pain, and in some cases treat depression.
- Learn about fibromyalgia. This makes coping easier. Then, take an active role in your treatment.
- Think about joining a support group with others who have fibromyalgia to learn more and get support.

When should you call for help?



Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You feel sad, helpless, or hopeless; lose interest in things you used to enjoy; or have other symptoms of depression.
- Your fibromyalgia symptoms get worse.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://kp.org/health>

Enter **V003** in the search box to learn more about "**Fibromyalgia: Care Instructions**".

Current as of: December 13, 2021