



# FIBROMYALGIA

Bromley

Well

HEALTH FACT SHEET

Updated July 2024

## What is Fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia is a long-term condition that causes widespread pain. The pain can be felt in any part of the body. In addition to pain people may experience extreme tiredness, stiffness in their muscles and have difficulty sleeping.

## What are the symptoms?

In addition to pain and tiredness symptoms can include:

- Headaches – ranging from ordinary types to migraine
- Alternating diarrhoea and constipation, sometimes accompanied by gas in the abdomen or nausea
- Lack of concentration, temporary memory impairment and word mix up
- Clumsiness and dizziness
- Sensitivity to changes in the weather and to noise, bright lights, smoke and other environmental factors
- Allergies

## What are the causes?

The exact cause is unknown, but it is likely that a number of factors are involved:

- Changes in the way the central nervous system processes pain messages around the body resulting in constant feelings of and sensitivity to pain.
- Research has shown that people living with Fibromyalgia have lower than usual levels of certain hormones. Our hormones control many things in our bodies including how we process pain.
- Triggers. In some people the condition is triggered by physical or emotional stress caused by a stressful life event such as; an injury, an operation, an abusive relationship, relationship breakdown or bereavement.

## What about treatment?

Treatment for is designed to relieve the symptoms but because there are many symptoms associated with Fibromyalgia no single treatment will work for everyone. You might find yourself referred to a:

- Rheumatologist – a specialist in conditions that affect muscles and joints
- Neurologist – a specialist in conditions of the central nervous system
- Psychologist – a specialist in mental health and psychological treatments

You could be prescribed: Painkillers, Anti-depressants, Muscle relaxants, Medication to help you sleep

## SELF CARE TIPS

### RELAXATION

Finding ways to relax has been shown to help manage symptoms. You could try having a warm bath, listening to music or techniques such as mindfulness and meditation.

### HEAT

Having a warm shower or bath or using a hot water bottle helps many people to reduce pain, stiffness and aching.

### DIET

No particular diet has been found to help but it's important to eat a healthy, balanced diet and try to cut down on caffeine and alcohol.

### EXERCISE AND PACING

Physical activity has been shown to be helpful for people living with Fibromyalgia. Exercise improves our mood, builds our stamina, keeps us supple, helps us sleep and helps us maintain a healthy weight. If you are living with Fibromyalgia and haven't exercised in a while, you may experience pain and discomfort when you start. You will need to build up gradually and pace yourself.

**To register with Bromley Well:**

**Freephone 0808 278 7898**

**Or register online:**

**[www.bromleywell.org.uk/refer](http://www.bromleywell.org.uk/refer)**

**Contact Lifestyle Support direct**

**07985 431484 / 07985 444210**

**or email**

**[enquiry@bromleywell.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@bromleywell.org.uk)**



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### FURTHER RESOURCES

#### [FMA UK \(Fibromyalgia Action UK\)](#)

**Helpline: 0300 999 3333**

**Benefits Line: 0300 999 0055**

A national charity providing information and advice for the public and for health professionals. A really useful site containing advice, the latest research and information about treatment.

#### **Bromley Well Fibromyalgia Peer Support Group**

Meets face to face bi-weekly on Mondays at Community House, South Street, Bromley, BR1 1RH between 14:30 – 16:00. Also, online bi-weekly Fridays 11:00 to 12:00 Further details can be found on our events calendar: [Events – Bromley Well](#)

#### [Fibromyalgia NHS conditions](#)

Fibromyalgia Self Help guidance from NHS conditions.

#### [Pain UK](#)

Charity that supports people with chronic pain through helplines and resources.

**References:** NHS conditions <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/fibromyalgia/> NHS inform [Fibromyalgia | NHS inform](#) FMA UK information packs <https://fmauk.org/information-packs-mainmenu-58/booklet-mainmenu-135>

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