



FIBROMYALGIA

Bromley

Well

HEALTH FACT SHEET

Updated December 2025

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 tension headaches to migraines.
- Alternating diarrhoea and constipation, sometimes accompanied by gas in the abdomen or nausea.
- Cognitive issues like lack of concentration, temporary memory impairment, and mixing up words – sometimes referred to as 'brain fog' or 'fibro fog'.
- Clumsiness and dizziness.
- Sensitivity to changes in the weather and to noise, bright lights, smoke and other environmental factors.
- Allergies.

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.

To register with Bromley Well:
Freephone 0808 278 7898
Or register online:
www.bromleywell.org.uk/refer

Contact Lifestyle Support direct
07985 431484 / 07985 444210
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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?

As there are many symptoms that can be associated with fibromyalgia, there is no single treatment that 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, or medication to help you sleep.

SELF CARE TIPS

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.

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Some myths

Myth 1: The pain is 'all in your head'

This is not true! For a long time people with fibromyalgia have been told that their symptoms are "all in their head". This can bring a lot of shame and make it hard to keep advocating for yourself. Fibromyalgia is a very real condition and it is estimated that 1 in 20 people are affected by fibromyalgia. While we know that fibromyalgia causes widespread pain across the body, we do not currently know why this happens. Even though a clear cause has not yet been identified, this does not mean that your pain is imaginary or does not exist.

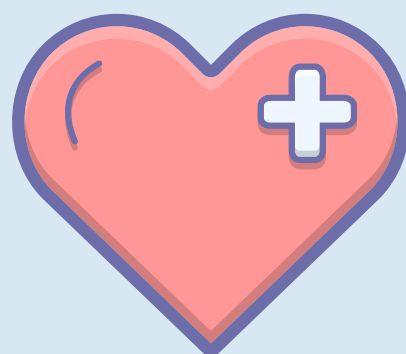
Myth 2: There is no treatment for fibromyalgia

This is not true. While there is no cure, there are various treatments that have been shown to help some symptoms of fibromyalgia. Currently, the three main types of treatment for fibromyalgia are medicine, exercise, and talking therapies. Acupuncture may also help reduce pain, although the effects of this treatment for fibromyalgia have not been studied as well. Some treatments may work better for some, and you may find that a combination of treatments helps. There are also specialist fibromyalgia clinics, such as the ME/CFS and Fibromyalgia Service at University College London Hospital, that offer different therapies. Speak with your GP to discuss your treatment options.

SELF CARE TIPS

ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

Finding pain management techniques that work for you can involve a lot of trial and error. This could include trying alternative therapies, such as massages, acupuncture, hyperbaric chambers (oxygen chambers). Try as many things as possible to add to your pain management toolbox.



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FURTHER RESOURCES

FMA UK (Fibromyalgia Action UK)

<http://www.fmauk.org>

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

www.nhs.uk/conditions/fibromyalgia/self-help/

Fibromyalgia Self Help guidance from NHS conditions.

Pain UK

painuk.org/help-and-support/

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

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

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