

Published on *SeniorNavigator* (<https://seniornavigator.org>)

Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia is a type of arthritis that causes pain, fatigue, emotional and mental distress, and sleep problems. There is no cure, but you can manage it with self-care, therapies, and medicines.

Overview

Fibromyalgia is a type of arthritis that causes pain and disability, reducing a person's quality of life. It can cause chronic (long-term) pain:

- All over the body.
- On one side of the body.
- Above or below the waist.

Millions of people have fibromyalgia in the United States.

- Fibromyalgia affects people of all ages, including children.
- It's most common in adults.

Experiencing Pain Differently

People with fibromyalgia may be more sensitive to pain than those who don't have it. This is known as "abnormal pain perception processing."

Fibromyalgia can lead to other health problems

People with fibromyalgia are more likely to:

- End up in the hospital.
- Experience a lower quality of life.
- Have major depressive disorders.

- Have other types of arthritis, like [osteoarthritis](#), [rheumatoid arthritis](#), and [lupus](#).

Signs and symptoms

The most common symptoms of fibromyalgia are:

- Pain and stiffness all over the body.
- Fatigue or tiredness.
- Depression and anxiety.
- Sleep problems.
- Problems with thinking, memory, and concentration.
- Headaches, including migraines.

Other symptoms may include:

- Tingling or numbness in the hands and feet.
- Pain in the face or jaw, like temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders.
- Digestive problems, like stomach pain, bloating, constipation, or irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

Risk factors

The causes of fibromyalgia are not known. But certain things can increase someone's risk of developing it.

Risk factors or triggers may include:

- Stressful or traumatic events, accidents, or injuries.
- Repeat injuries, such as repeated joint stress from sports or physical jobs.
- Illness, including viral infections.

Some people may be more likely to develop fibromyalgia:

- People aged 30 to 50.
- Women.
- People with related conditions— like [lupus](#), [rheumatoid arthritis](#), or [osteoarthritis](#).
- People with a family history of fibromyalgia.

Diagnosis

Finding out if you have fibromyalgia

Doctors can diagnose fibromyalgia by doing:

- A physical exam.
- X-rays.
- Lab tests.
- A review of your health history.

Treatment

There's no cure for fibromyalgia, but health care providers can help treat and manage symptoms with therapies and medicine. People with fibromyalgia can also learn ways to manage symptoms on their own.

Care Team

Your health care provider may suggest working with a team of specialists, including:

- Primary care provider.
- Rheumatologist (specialist in fibromyalgia, arthritis, and related conditions).
- Pain management specialist.
- Physical therapist.
- Mental health professional.
- Sleep specialist.
- Physiologist (science expert on the human body).

Find a rheumatologist near you

Click on the locator below. Filter by country and state for a list of rheumatology providers in your area.

[American College of Rheumatology locator](#)

Treatment for fibromyalgia

- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).
 - CBT is a type of talk therapy meant to change how people act or think.
 - It can help someone cope with negative thoughts about their symptoms.
- Medicine.

- A doctor may prescribe medicine or recommend over-the-counter pain relievers.

Researchers are working to better understand the causes of fibromyalgia and to develop new treatment strategies.

Doctors can recommend a fibromyalgia treatment plan for you.

Self-care for fibromyalgia

People with fibromyalgia can reduce pain and improve function by:

- Learning self-management skills.
- Being [physically active](#).
- Keeping a [healthy weight](#).
- Protecting their joints.
- Having good [sleep](#) habits.
- Managing their stress.
- Talking to a health care provider.

Learn more about [self-care strategies for arthritis](#), which can help you feel better.

Resources

- [Rheumatology Provider Directory](#)
- [American College of Rheumatology](#)
- [National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases](#)
- [National Fibromyalgia Association](#)

Article Source

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

Source URL

<https://www.cdc.gov>

Last Reviewed

Wednesday, July 10, 2024