

Fibromyalgia and Dysregulation Spectrum Syndrome

Solving the Mystery of These Modern Maladies

The term fibromyalgia comes from the Latin word *fibra* (fiber) and the Greek words *myo* (muscle) and *algos* (pain). So, fibromyalgia refers to a condition involving chronic pain in muscle fibers. Fibromyalgia is a controversial condition. According to Chanchal Cabrera, author of the book *Fibromyalgia: A Journey Towards Healing*, some doctors deny its existence and others use it as an excuse for their inability to diagnose the cause of a person's ill health. Experts suggest that fibromyalgia, also known as fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS), affects about 2-5% of the US population, or about 4-6 million people.

According to Catherine Browne, a licensed acupuncturist, the typical FMS patient looks healthy; no one can imagine that they are ill and in a great deal of pain. As a result, FMS sufferers often receive little empathy from family, friends, or even health care practitioners.

Patients diagnosed with fibromyalgia are usually in the middle to upper earning brackets and are ambitious, hardworking and perfectionists. Women are seven to nine times more likely to suffer from FMS, which occurs most often in women of childbearing age. However, it can affect children and the elderly, as well.

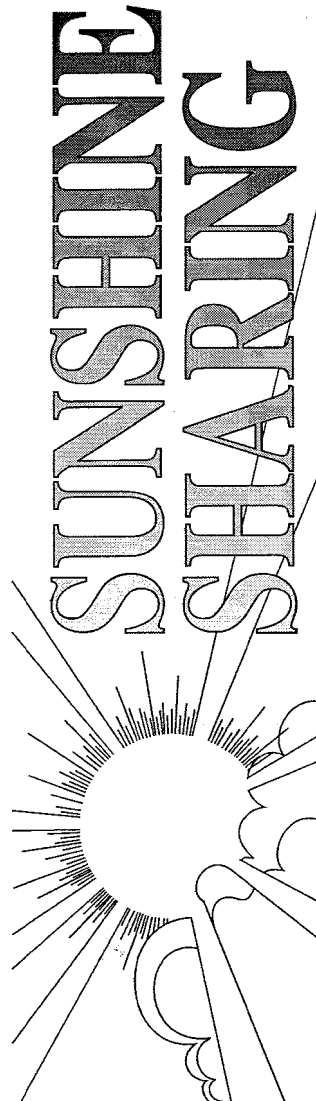
FMS is often confused with, or can be concurrent with, chronic fatigue immune dysfunction syndrome (CFIDS), irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and rheumatoid arthritis, as they all share similar symptomology. In fact, researcher Muhammad Yunus, M.D., of the University of Illinois College of Medicine, views fibromyalgia as being part of a larger spectrum of conditions, which he calls Dysregulation Spectrum Syndrome (DSS). Here is the cluster of diseases Dr. Yunus associates with DSS:

- Fibromyalgia (FMS)
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Multiple chemical sensitivities
- Migraines and other headaches
- Myofascial pain syndrome
- Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS)
- Irritable bladder
- Primary dysmenorrhea (menstrual pain)
- Restless leg syndrome
- Temporo-mandibular joint (TMJ)

From a natural health perspective, finding an exact name or names for a particular person's cluster of symptoms is relatively unimportant. What is important is identifying the underlying causes of a person's health issues. Medical science has not determined an exact cause of FMS or many of the other conditions associated with DSS, but the fact that these disorders typically overlap, suggests they have common root causes. And, since FMS is essentially unheard of in third world and developing countries, we can deduce that it probably has its roots in our modern diet and lifestyle.

Based on the clinical experience of herbalists and other natural healers working with FMS, its root causes are most likely nutritional deficiencies from junk food diets, excessive stress, poor gastrointestinal function and exposure to chemicals and drugs. In this issue of *Sunshine Sharing*, we'll point the finger of suspicion on these four probable causes of fibromyalgia (FMS) and the other problems associated with DDS. We'll also discuss what can be done to correct these underlying causes, using herbs, supplements, improved diet and lifestyle changes.

Learn more about FMS & DSS and what to do about them inside...



Your guide to better health the natural way.

Vol. 19 No. 8

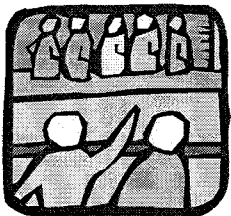
Important Notice

The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

Sunshine Sharing is an independent educational publication and receives no financial support from any herb or health product manufacturer. Your comments, questions and personal experiences are welcome. Send them to *Sunshine Sharing*, P.O. Box 911239, St. George, UT 84791-1239 or comments@treelite.com.

Copyright © 2008 by Tree of Light Publishing (a division of Kether-One, Inc.). Photocopying this publication for distribution is strictly forbidden. If you receive a photocopy of this publication, the distributor of said photocopies is in violation of copyright law.

Managing Editor/Writer: Steven Horne
Research/Writing: Paula Perretty
Additional Research: Kimberly Balas
Associate Editors: Carolyn & Hugh Hughes, Sharon Grimes



Fingering the Four Suspected Causes

Modern medicine hasn't identified the cause of FMS, but as we discussed on page one, it is likely caused by diet and lifestyle factors, as evidenced by the fact that many people have experienced relief from FMS

by making diet and lifestyle changes. While there is no "magic bullet" formula or secret "recipe" of things to do to cure FMS, working on the suspected causes will probably bring relief, if not a complete recovery.

When approaching FMS and other DSS disorders, one needs to think like a detective. The detective examines the scene of the crime looking for clues as to "who did it." We can also use the experience of numerous natural health practitioners who have worked with FMS to come up with a list of suspected causes. So, based on this detective work, here are four suspected underlying causes of FMS and DSS and what to do to fix these disease-causing factors.

Suspect #1:

Nutritional Deficiencies from a Diet of Refined and Processed Foods

Nutrition should be a person's first concern in overcoming a health problem like FMS. A mild food diet consisting primarily of fresh vegetables with some fruits has led to a reduction in joint stiffness and pain in many FMS sufferers. In the beginning, about 80% of the diet should be fresh vegetables with some fruits. These are alkalizing foods, which aid in reducing acid waste in the tissues. They also contain antioxidants which reduce inflammation and tissue damage.

The remaining 20% of the diet can consist of high quality proteins and whole grains. Sugar, refined carbohydrates, processed vegetable oils, shortening, margarine and processed, packaged foods should be avoided. In addition, FMS sufferers usually benefit from some specific supplements, including (in order of importance) magnesium, iodine, omega-3 essential fatty acids and antioxidants.

Magnesium is essential for the synthesis of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the energy powerhouse for cells. Deficiencies of magnesium cause cells to have to use anaerobic pathways to produce energy, which leads to lactic acid formation in muscles and to pain. Magnesium ions are also essential to helping muscles relax, so deficiencies lead to muscle stiffness.

Fibralgia is a supplement containing magnesium with malic acid. It aids in the production of ATP in the muscles and helps reduce muscle pain and stiffness. It also helps reduce fatigue in people suffering from FMS.

Iodine is an essential nutrient for the thyroid gland and many FMS sufferers also have a dysfunctional thyroid. Dr. David Brownstein, author of *Iodine: Why You Need It, Why You Can't Live Without It*, claims that iodine supplements alone have cured fibromyalgia. This helps explain why several natural healers independently discovered that black walnut was helpful for FMS. Black walnut,

especially **ATC Concentrated Black Walnut**, is a good source of natural iodine. It is also antimicrobial and antiparasitic and mildly detoxifying. **Liquid Dulse** is another good iodine supplement.

Omega-3 essential fatty acids are essential for the health of nerve fibers and aid in the production of chemical messengers resulting in reduced inflammation and pain. Most modern diets are deficient in omega-3 fatty acids, so a supplement like **Super Omega-3 EPA** may also be helpful.

FMS sufferers who are having a hard time eating as many vegetables and fruits as they should, will find supplementing their intake of antioxidant nutrients helpful. **Thai-Go** is a tasty way to improve antioxidant intake. It has the highest oxygen radical absorbing capacity (ORAC) rating of any liquid antioxidant supplement, and this has been certified by the company that developed the ORAC testing. It contains mangosteen, which contains xanthones proven to have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activity.

Suspect #2:

Digestive Weakness with Intestinal Inflammation and Leaky Gut

People who suffer from FMS, chronic fatigue, auto-immune disorders and cancer all tend to be low in enzymes. This is due to the high level of enzyme inhibitors and the lack of raw and enzyme-rich foods in most modern diets. Supplementing enzymes with **Proactazyme Plus** or **Food Enzymes** is important for people suffering from just about any chronic health problems.

In many cases, these people also have a hiatal hernia, a condition where the stomach protrudes upward into the opening in the diaphragm for the esophagus. This mechanical problem inhibits deep breathing, circulation and digestive function. It needs to be mechanically corrected. Consult with the person who gave you this newsletter for more information.

One of the biggest contributing factors to FMS and its related conditions may be chronic intestinal inflammation and leaky gut syndrome. Intestinal inflammation can be caused by enzyme deficiency, poor digestion, environmental toxins, yeast or bacterial infections, parasites or drug medications. The inflammation causes the intestines to become excessively porous, which allows toxins from the digestive tract to easily enter the bloodstream, causing irritation and inflammation to tissues.

Additional Help and Information

For more information on dealing with fibromyalgia (FMS) and its related disorders associated with dysregulation spectrum syndrome (DSS) with natural remedies talk to the person who gave you this newsletter. They have additional handouts and resource materials to help you. You can also consult some of the following sources for more information:

Fibromyalgia: A Journey Toward Healing by Chanchal Cabrera.

"Fibromyalgia" by KP Khalsa in *Journal of the American Herbalist Guild* (2005: Vol. 6, # 1)

Fibromyalgia: My Journey to Wellness by Claire Musickant

You Don't Have to Be Extreme to Get the Benefits

Moderate exercise also helps FMS sufferers. Movements such as walking, swimming, tai chi, stretching or lymphasizing (gently bouncing up and down on a mini-trampoline) will improve lymphatic flow, stretch and relax muscles and help the body detoxify. Twenty minutes a day or even 30 minutes three times a week can have positive benefits.

Regular use of a fiber supplement like **Psyllium Hulls Combination** or **Everybody's Fiber** can reduce intestinal inflammation and aid in the repair of leaky gut. **Uña d'gato** (also known as Cat's Claw) is one of best herbal remedies available for toning up intestinal membranes and reducing gut leakage. **Kudzu/St. John's wort** is another great herbal supplement that helps here.

A yeast or parasite cleanse may also be needed. Consult the person who gave you this newsletter for additional help and information about this.

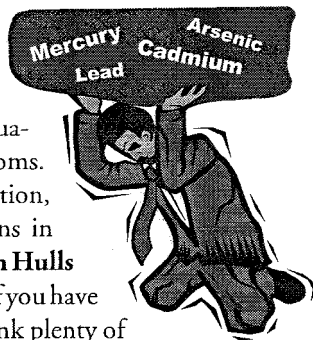
Suspect #3: Environmental Toxicity with Impaired Liver Detoxification

It is very probable that environmental toxins play a role in FMS and DSS. However, harsh cleansing is usually contraindicated in these situations because it will aggravate symptoms. What is needed is gentle detoxification, starting with fiber to help bind toxins in the gut. Again, consider using **Psyllium Hulls Combination** or **Everybody's Fiber**, if you have IBS or a sensitive colon. Be sure to drink plenty of purified water when taking fiber.

In addition to the fiber, a small amount of a supplement to help cleanse the liver and aid its detoxification process is also helpful. Taking just one capsule of **Enviro-Detox** or one to two capsules of **Liver Balance** daily is all that is needed. These formulas will encourage the liver to break down chemicals in the system. The fiber will help bind them and remove them. As your body gets stronger, you can take more.

Heavy metal toxicity may play a role in some of the problems associated with DSS. If this is a problem, try adding one capsule of **Heavy Metal Detox** per day along with six to eight capsules of **Algin**, a mucilaginous fiber from kelp that binds heavy metals in the intestines for elimination.

One other factor to consider in detoxifying the body is helping the cells to remove toxins that may be lodged inside the tissues. **Cellular Energy** aids the production of energy in the cell, which helps cells and tissues eliminate toxins. It can also help reduce fatigue and weakness and increase stamina in FMS and other similar conditions.

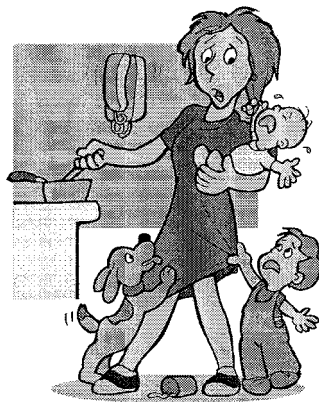


Suspect #4:

Adrenal Exhaustion (Chronic Stress)

On page one, we indicated that FMS is most common in hardworking perfectionists. K.P. Khalsa, RH(AHG), has noted that FMS sufferers are usually high achieving women that are burning the candle at both ends and in the middle, too. From this point of view, FMS can be considered a "health collapse" related to chronic stress.

The adrenal glands are responsible for helping the body cope with stress. They synthesize cortisol to control inflammation and balance blood sugar in times of crisis. They also produce hormones



Continued on page 4

Natural Alternatives for Symptomatic Relief

Modern medicine's approach to FMS is targeted at providing symptomatic relief. Such an approach is failing to deal with the underlying causes of this condition, and hence is ineffective at providing any long-term solution. However, the FMS sufferer does need some symptomatic relief while working on long term solutions to their problem—fortunately, there are natural remedies that can help!

Analgesics (pain relievers) and muscle relaxants can help reduce muscle cramping and pain. **Deep Relief Oil** can be applied topically to reduce muscle tension and ease pain. It has a natural analgesic action due to the nutmeg and clove oils it contains. **Tei Fu Essential Oil** or **Tei Fu Massage Lotion** is another option for topical application for pain relief.

Lobelia Essence can be applied topically (along with Deep Relief oil or Tei Fu oil) as a muscle relaxant. It can also be taken internally for this purpose. Lobelia is a powerful antispasmodic that reduces muscle cramping and pain. It improves lymphatic flow for cellular detoxification, too.

Kava Kava is another antispasmodic herb that can relax tense muscles. It is also a mild analgesic and a mood elevator. It can be taken at bedtime to aid falling asleep.

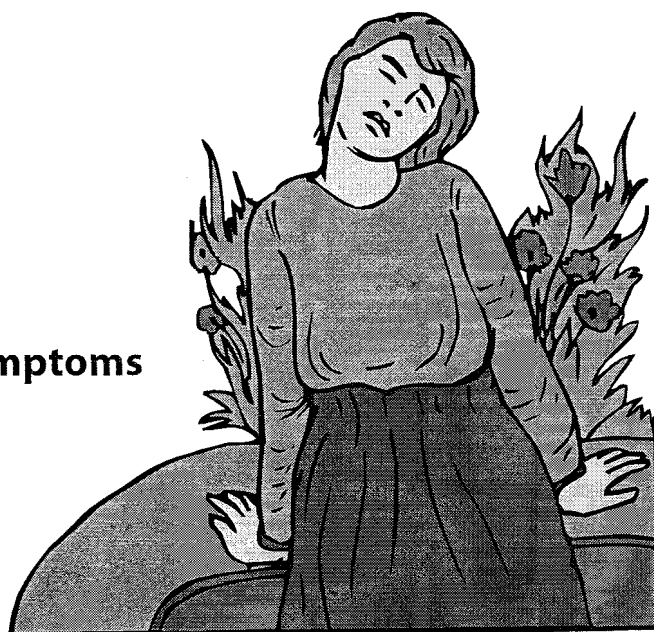
Herbs that enhance circulation can also be beneficial for symptomatic relief. **Capsicum** normalizes circulation throughout the body and has pain-relieving qualities. It can be applied topically with lobelia to ease pain and cramping, as well as being used internally.

Other remedies to consider include **Super Algae**, which can reduce pain intensity, and **Ginkgo Gotu Kola with Bacopa**, which improves circulation and aids in overcoming brain fog.

If you experience:

- ◆ Chronic muscle stiffness and pain
- ◆ Debilitating fatigue
- ◆ Tender muscles and joints
- ◆ Mental confusion ("brain fog")
- ◆ Disturbed sleep
- ◆ Frequent Headaches and other symptoms associated with fibromyalgia

The information in this newsletter can help!



like epinephrine (adrenaline) to give us the energy we need to face challenges.

Chronic stress depletes the adrenal glands, which makes it difficult for the body to control pain and inflammation. Adrenal exhaustion also leads to a collapse of a person's drive and energy and produces fatigue coupled with restless and disturbed sleep patterns. Adrenal exhaustion is common in person's suffering from FMS and other conditions associated with DSS. If this is coupled with low thyroid due to a lack of iodine, then a person is going to feel constantly exhausted as the thyroid and adrenals regulate energy production in the body.

To overcome adrenal exhaustion, it is necessary to avoid refined carbohydrates (particularly sugar), alcohol and caffeinated beverages. An adrenal glandular like **Adrenal Support** will help to rebuild the adrenal glands and restore energy levels and sleep.

Rebuilding the adrenals will also help to reduce pain and inflammation throughout the body. If the thyroid is also low, then adding **Thyroid Support** will also be necessary for restoring energy to the system.

Another formula to consider is **Nervous Fatigue Formula**. This Chinese blend helps with mental confusion and muddled thinking ("brain fog") and fatigue coupled with disturbed and restless sleep. It gently aids liver detoxification, too.

Of course, it also helps to learn to deal better with stress. People suffering from any of the chronic illnesses associated with DSS should learn to pace themselves by setting realistic goals and balancing work with rest and recreation. Taking breaks when one is tired, getting a good night's sleep and allowing time in one's life for relaxing activities is a must. Consider stretching, meditation, yoga, tai chi, relaxing baths or long walks in nature.