Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia is a form of rheumatic disease. It is associated with pain and stiffness that come and go. The pain and stiffness are located in the ligaments, tendons and muscles. These tissues surround the joints. This is the reason some people feel that they have arthritis. The condition can occur in men or women at any age. It is most common in women between the ages of twenty and fifty. Fibromyalgia is not a life-threatening disease.

CAUSES

The exact cause of fibromyalgia is unknown. It is found in many conditions. Some of these conditions are:

- Poor muscle development.
- The deepest stages of sleep may be interrupted. This causes fatigue and loss of endurance. All of this leads to stress and anxiety.
- Stress and anxiety may also cause fibromyalgia.
- Viral or bacterial infection may be a cause of fibromyalgia.
- Injury to the brain or spinal cord may cause fibromyalgia.

SYMPTOMS OF FIBROMYALGIA

- The main symptom of fibromyalgia is pain and stiffness to muscles and joints. It varies with time of day and from person to person.
- Fatigue is a common debilitating symptom.
- Other problems may include: numbness and tingling, bowel and bladder problems, headaches, visual problems, and problems with odors and noises.
- Depression or mood changes.
- Painful periods (*dysmenorrhea*).
- Dryness of the skin and/or eyes.

DIAGNOSIS

There are no specific tests for diagnosing fibromyalgia. The diagnosis is made by making sure nothing else is causing the problems.

TREATMENT

- Increasing physical fitness, decreasing pain and improving sleep all help fibromyalgia. Antidepressants to improve sleep are helpful.
- Sleeping pills, tranquilizers, and pain medications may make these problems worse
- Low impact aerobic exercise is helpful. and recommended for treatment of fibromyalgia. Starting out it may seem to make pain worse. Gradually increasing your tolerance will overcome this.
- Learning relaxation techniques and how to control stress will help you. Biofeedback, visual imagery, hypnosis, muscle relaxation, yoga and meditation are all forms of this.
- Anti-inflammatory medications may help for the short term as may physical therapy.
- Acupuncture or massage treatments.
- Muscle relaxant medication from your caregiver.
- Avoid stressful situations.
- Plan a healthy life style regarding your diet, sleep, rest, exercise. and friends.
- Find and practice a hobby that is enjoyable for you,
- Join a fibromyalgia support group for interaction, ideas, and sharing advice. This may be helpful.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

You are not having good results or improvement on your treatment.

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