

Is Fibro the Cause?

Diagnosing and treating fibromyalgia can be tricky, especially as it can mimic symptoms of other conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus and other autoimmune diseases in which your immune system attacks itself by mistake. People with fibromyalgia are also more likely to have other medical problems such as tension or migraine headache, chronic fatigue syndrome, mood and sleep disorders and irritable bowel syndrome, among others. Because there is no laboratory or other diagnostic test for fibromyalgia, it is determined based on patient symptoms and a physical examination.

If you think fibromyalgia may be to blame for the pain and fatigue that you or a loved one is suffering from, use this checklist to help make sense of the symptoms. Be honest when answering each question, and share this worksheet with your doctor at your next visit to help distinguish the symptoms of fibromyalgia from other conditions.

Are you a: Male Female

What is your age?

<20 years 20-50 years >50 years

Do you have pain all over (on both the right and left sides of your body and above and below your waist)? Yes No

How long has your pain lasted?

Less than 3 months

More than 3 months and Less than 12

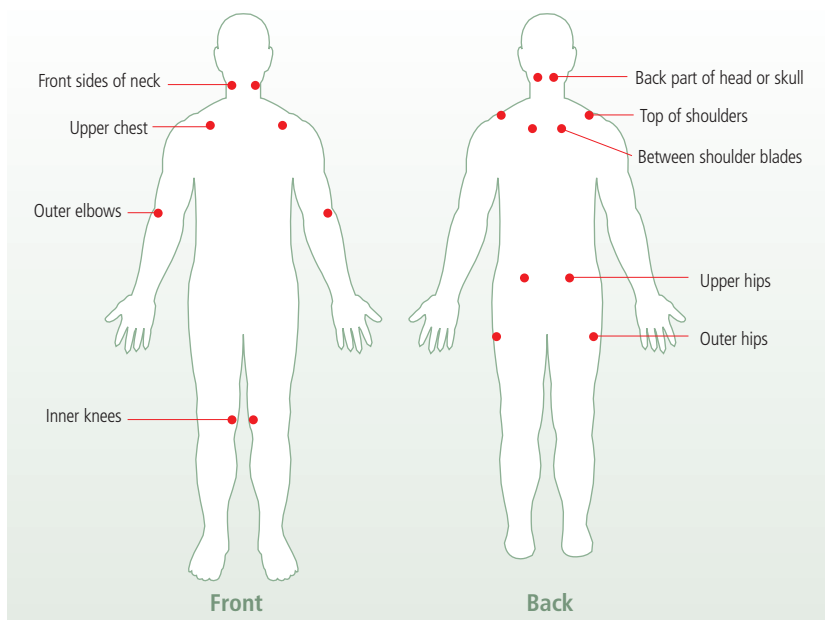
1 year or more

Do you have more pain when pressure is applied to certain areas?

Yes No

If yes, circle each tender point on the pictures below.

How many points did you circle? _____



Anyone can get fibromyalgia, but it is most common in women. In fact, 80 to 90% of those who have it are women.

Fibromyalgia is typically diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50 years old, and it peaks between 60 and 70 years of age.

Ongoing, widespread musculoskeletal pain is the hallmark sign of fibromyalgia.

To consider fibromyalgia, the pain must be present for at least 3 months and occur on both sides of the body *and* above and below the waist.

People with fibromyalgia have a much greater sensitivity to pain. In particular, there are 18 specific places, or "tender points," on the body (from the neck to the knees) that are exceptionally sensitive to touch. Your doctor may apply pressure to these points to see whether you feel more pain.

If you circled 11 or more of the tender point sites to the left, you may have fibromyalgia. Some doctors believe a patient can have fibromyalgia even if the required number of tender points is not met.

Fibromyalgia often co-exists with other conditions; for example, chronic fatigue syndrome, mood or sleep problems, irritable bowel syndrome and migraine.

Talk openly with your healthcare provider about your symptoms, other health problems you may have, as well as how the pain interferes with your daily life. This will help you work together to find the best treatment plan. Remember, pain related to fibromyalgia can vary in intensity and wax and wane over time.

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Fibromyalgia isn't just about pain. You may also experience memory loss or difficulty concentrating (also known as "fibro fog"), trouble sleeping (many patients also have sleep disorders such as restless leg syndrome or insomnia), migraine or tension headaches, among other problems.

Remember, signs and symptoms of fibromyalgia can vary, depending on the weather, stress, physical activity and time of day. While fibromyalgia is not caused by depression, half of patients report sustained periods of sadness.

Fibromyalgia is often seen in families, among siblings or mothers and their children; a possible genetic link is being explored in clinical research studies.

It's important to record your pain and how it affects your function. Consider using the American Pain Foundation's *Targeting Chronic Pain Notebook* to keep track your pain, sleep cycles and other important information.

As with other chronic pain conditions, fibromyalgia can make it difficult to accomplish daily tasks.

Do you have any of the following? (Check all that apply)

- Fatigue (Extreme tiredness most of the time or throughout the day, everyday)
- Trouble sleeping (frequent disruptions that leave you weary in the morning)
- Stiffness in your muscles and joints when you get up in the morning
- Tension headaches or migraine
- Tingling, burning, numbness, swelling or discoloration in your hands or feet
- Difficulties remembering things or concentrating (also called "fibro fog")
- Irritable bowel syndrome or other digestive disorders
- Problems or symptoms of the joints that connect your lower jaw to your skull (called Temporomandibular joint disorder, or TMJ)
- Painful periods
- Depression, anxiety or changes in your mood

Do you have a family history of fibromyalgia?

- Yes No

On a scale from 0-10 (0 being not at all and 10 being the worst ever), how would you rate the following problems over the last month? (Please circle)

Pain:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Stiffness when you wake up:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Lack of restful sleep/exhaustion:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Depression:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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How difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or participate in hobbies?

- Not difficult at all
- Somewhat difficult
- Very difficult
- Extremely difficult

This tool is adapted from the American College of Rheumatology's 1990 Criteria for the Classification of Fibromyalgia and other reputable sources. It is provided for educational and informational purposes only. APF is not engaged in rendering medical advice or professional services and this information should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem. APF makes no representations or warranties, expressed or implied.