

About Fibro Fact Sheets

Information on Fibromyalgia Syndrome Fact Sheet 2

What Are The Symptoms?

The possible symptoms of Fibro are very wide and varied and no two sufferers will have exactly the same problems. However, many have a majority of the common symptoms.

Chronic widespread pain is usually the primary symptom of Fibro. This can be aches, as if you have the flu or have run a long race; it can feel like joint pain, as if you have arthritis; it can be burning pain, feeling like someone is pouring acid through your body; or it can be shooting pain, as if you are being stabbed with large needles.¹

Fibro patients are also **hypersensitive to pain**: they feel pain from stimuli that should not be painful.^{1,2} Even the lightest touch can be painful; a hug can be excruciating. And the pain from something as simple as knocking your leg on a desk not only feels far worse than it should do, but can carry on being painful for far longer than normal. The medical terms for this are hyperalgesia (feeling more pain from a slight pain stimulus) and allodynia (feeling pain from a stimulus that should not be painful at all).



Chronic fatigue is common with Fibro and this is often linked with the non-restorative sleep that is typical of Fibro. With this non-restorative sleep, a Fibro sufferer's brain tends to wake them up slightly every time they get into the deep sleep that is needed for physical rejuvenation. This can lead to more fatigue, more pain and other symptoms.^{1,2} The fatigue of Fibro is not like being a bit tired all the time: it can hit suddenly, leaving a Fibro sufferer almost unable to stand; it can be overwhelming, making it impossible to do anything at all; you can feel so tired that it seems impossible to even lift your head.

Cognitive dysfunction is a common problem with Fibro and is nicknamed "Fibro-fog". This can include difficulty in understanding something, difficulty in making decisions, memory loss, problems with concentration, difficulties in speaking coherently and remembering words and problems with typing or writing.¹

People with Fibro often have **sensitivities or intolerances** to many things, from foods to chemicals. An exposure to something they are intolerant of can cause a flare in all the Fibro symptoms. People with Fibro can be hypersensitive to almost anything, including sound and light.^{1,2} Some people with Fibro struggle with sensory overload, where they cannot cope with too many stimuli at one time - for example, they may struggle in supermarkets or shopping malls, where there are a lot of conflicting lights, noises and smells all at once - and this can have an impact on the cognitive difficulties.

Myofascial pain is present in many people with Fibro. Myofascial Pain Syndrome (MPS) or Chronic Myofascial Pain (CMP) is a diagnosis in its own right and many people are affected by this kind of issue at some time during their lives as myofascial issues can develop from stress or trauma. Myofascial tension and myofascial trigger points can cause a range of symptoms that many people with Fibro experience, including stiff, knotty muscles, burning or stabbing pain, headaches or migraine and nausea.¹

Abnormal responses to exercise are often a problem with Fibro. These can include an over-the-top and sometimes delayed reaction to exercise, as well as muscle weakness and poor stamina unrelated to fitness. People with Fibro can find that their ability to perform exercises varies hugely: for example sometimes they might be able to climb the stairs with little problem, but another time they might not have the strength to manage one step. Myofascial issues can have an impact on this, as can sleep disturbances.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is common amongst people with Fibro¹ and this is often worsened by food intolerances sufferers have. **Gastro-Oesophageal Reflux Disease (GORD)** and **Irritable Bladder** are also possible Fibro symptoms.

Autonomic Dysfunction (sometimes called **Dysautonomia**) of some kind is common with Fibro: this simply means that the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) isn't working properly.¹ The ANS keeps various factors in your body at normal levels, including heart rate, blood pressure, perspiration and respiration. Autonomic Dysfunction with Fibro can include not being able to properly regulate your temperature - people with Fibro are often either too hot or too cold - and fainting.



Headaches and migraines are also common amongst people with Fibro.

Other symptoms include **Restless Leg Syndrome** or **Periodic Limb Movement Disorder**, **Tremors**, **loss of Coordination**, **Tinnitus**, **Mitral Valve prolapse**, **slow recovery from illness**, **Sleep Starts** (jumping awake as you fall to sleep), **Anxiety** and **problems with the Menstrual cycle** in women.¹

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