



## IS FMS ALL IN MY HEAD?

No, it isn't. The American Medical Association recognized FMS as a specific disorder in 1987. FMS was first described in medical literature in 1816. It has also been called fibrositis and chronic rheumatism.

Doctors have found specific differences in the neurological systems of FMS patients when compared to those of people who do not have FMS. The changes show up in brain scans and other tests used in research. Those tests are not usually available to doctors who need to make a diagnosis.

In a study done at the University of Michigan Medical School in 2002, brain scans showed that patients with FMS experienced pain in reaction to light pressure. On average, people without FMS tolerated twice as much pressure as those with FMS before they experienced pain.

FMS sufferers' spinal fluids have higher levels of a chemical the body uses to indicate that it is in pain. Their brains also have decreased blood flow in areas that process pain signals.

## TO LEARN MORE

You may get better care if you educate yourself about Fibromyalgia Syndrome and act as your own advocate. There are many books and web sites that offer information. Here are a few of them.

*The First Year: Fibromyalgia: An Essential Guide for the Newly Diagnosed*, Claudia Craig Marek

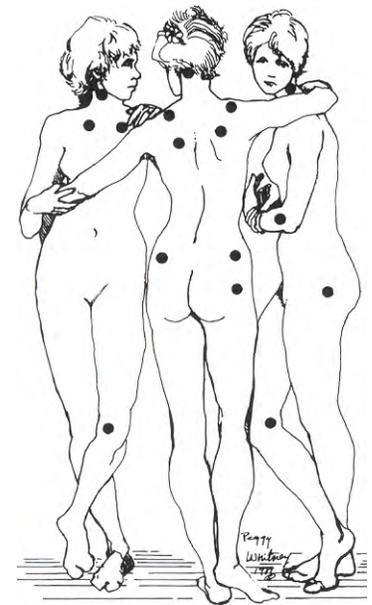
*Fibromyalgia and Chronic Myofascial Pain: A Survival Guide*, Devin Starlanyl  
<http://www. Dover.net/~devstar/>

The National Fibromyalgia Association  
<http://www.fmaware.org/>  
2200 N. Glassell Street, Suite A  
Orange, California 92865  
714-921-0150

The Fibromyalgia Network  
<http://www.fmnetnews.com/>  
P.O. Box 31750  
Tucson, Arizona 85751  
800-853-2929

## FIBROMYALGIA FACTS

*For Patients and Family Members*



Artwork is based on *The Three Graces* by Baron Jean-Baptiste Regnault. Reprinted from *Arthritis and Rheumatism Journal*, 1990, with permission of The American College of Rheumatology.

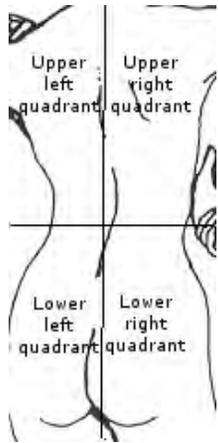
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## WHAT IS IT?

Fibromyalgia Syndrome, or FMS, is a neurological disorder. The main symptoms are widespread chronic pain and fatigue. You may be more sensitive to things like noises, smells, and temperature changes. Sleep disturbances are also common.

## DIAGNOSING FMS

Have you had continuous pain in all four quadrants of the body for at least three months? If so, FMS is a possible culprit.



There is no test available to diagnose FMS. Your doctor will begin by checking you for other diseases that may cause your symptoms. Arthritis, Lyme disease, and lupus are some of the possibilities.

Your doctor will give you a tender point examination. As shown on the cover of this brochure, there are 18 points involved in the exam. The doctor will apply light pressure to each point. If you at least 11 of those points are painful, you may have FMS.

## WHO GETS FMS?

Anyone. While most patients are diagnosed in their 20s or 30s, children and senior citizens may also develop FMS. More females than males are diagnosed with FMS.

## TREATMENT

Unfortunately, there is no known cure for FMS. Treatment is currently limited to alleviating its symptoms.

### ✦ Improve Sleep

You may need medications or supplements to help you sleep. Melatonin or Benadryl help some people, while others need sleeping pills or medications used to treat sleep disorders.

### ✦ Reduce Stress

Reducing the stress in your life as much as possible is your second goal. Obviously, your doctor cannot do this for you. It's up to you.

What bugs you? If you can avoid it, do so. Don't carpool with that obnoxious guy who gives you headaches. Don't put up with exposure to cigarette smoke. Change your work schedule, if possible, to avoid traffic. .

### ✦ Control Pain

Treating pain aggressively helps to avoid further sensitization. In other words, don't just "Grin and Bear It." Ask your

physician for pain medications that work for you.

### ✦ Keep Moving

Low-impact aerobic exercise, such as water aerobics, has been found to improve the quality of life for those with FMS.

## WHAT CAUSES FMS?

Honestly? We don't know.

Many patients experience a triggering event—an accident, surgery, or an extended illness—after which they develop FMS. Some people develop FMS after prolonged periods of extreme stress.

It is possible that there is a genetic factor that makes some people more susceptible to FMS than others, as there are often multiple FMS patients in one family.



Some doctors believe that sleep disorders cause FMS.