



*Malvern Sleep Clinic*

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## FIBROMYALGIA

Fibromyalgia is a common syndrome in which a person has long-term, body-wide pain and tenderness in the joints, muscles, tendons, and other soft tissues. Fibromyalgia has also been linked to fatigue, sleep problems, headaches, depression, and anxiety. Fibromyalgia is most common among women aged 20 to 50.

Possible causes or triggers of Fibromyalgia include:

- Physical or emotional trauma
- Abnormal pain response
- Sleep disturbances

Pain is the main symptom of Fibromyalgia, it may be mild to severe.

- Painful areas are called tender points. Tender points are found in the soft tissue on the back of the neck, shoulders, chest, lower back, hips, shins, elbows, and knees. The pain then spreads out from these areas.
- The pain may feel like a deep ache, or a shooting, burning pain.
- The joints are not affected, although the pain may feel like it is coming from the joints.

People with fibromyalgia tend to wake up with body aches and stiffness. For some patients, pain improves during the day and gets worse at night. Some patients have pain all day long. Pain may get worse with activity, cold or damp weather, anxiety, and stress. Fatigue, depressed mood, and sleep problems are seen in almost all patients with fibromyalgia. Many say that they can't get to sleep or stay asleep, and they feel tired when they wake up.

The goal of treatment is to help relieve pain and other symptoms. The first type of treatment may involve:

- Physical therapy, exercise and fitness program, stress-relief methods, including light massage and relaxation techniques

Many drugs are also used to treat the condition, including:

- Anti-seizure drugs, antidepressants, muscle relaxants, pain relievers and sleeping aids

Cognitive-behavioural therapy is an important part of treatment. This therapy helps to:

- Deal with negative thoughts, keep a diary of pain and symptoms, recognize what makes your symptoms worse, seek out enjoyable activities, set limits

Other recommendations include:

- Eat a well-balanced diet, avoid caffeine, practice good sleep routines to improve quality of sleep,
- Acupressure and acupuncture