

The

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# Fibromyalgia Magazine

Support for the FM FaMily



# UK Fibromyalgia Awareness Week 6 – 12 September 2015

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## ASK THE DOCTOR

By Dr. Jenner



### Living With Fibromyalgia - Current Treatments & Thinking

Those who suffer with fibromyalgia are all too familiar with chronic and widespread pain throughout their body, along with nights of poor sleep, days of fatigue, and oftentimes depression. Furthermore, management of these symptoms is undoubtedly complex and challenging. While the diagnosis of fibromyalgia has long been controversial, the symptoms and distress experienced by patients remains ever-present. The causes of fibromyalgia are not yet completely understood, and unfortunately this can sometimes compromise the potential for optimal management. Luckily, in recent years, numerous effective, evidence-based treatments have come to light for managing fibromyalgia.

The medication Amitriptyline has often been mentioned as a first-line treatment for neuropathic pain. However, the fact that there is little evidence to truly support its long-term efficacy leaves something to be desired. Of course, many have seen positive results with this particular drug, but it is important not to overestimate the true effectiveness. Amitriptyline should undoubtedly be considered as part of a treatment plan for fibromyalgia, however only a minority of patients will achieve satisfactory pain relief in the long term.

The truth is, there is no "cure all" for fibromyalgia, and certainly no "magic pill". This is why it is important to explore all options when it comes to both medication and complementary treatments. There are effective medications that work on the known neurotransmitter problems, in addition to medication-free options. The results can lead to a vast improvement in overall wellbeing.

Physical therapies are a great place to start, as they can provide a multitude of benefits to fibromyalgia patients. Furthermore, there is a significant amount of evidence to recommend specific types of physical therapy. Those who partake in regular aerobic exercise (around 20 minutes per day, two to three times per week) often note an improvement in wellbeing, aerobic capacity, tenderness, and pain as compared to those who do not partake. Additionally, strength training can also reduce pain and tenderness amongst fibromyalgia patients.

Passive physical therapies such as a heated pools or spa treatments, in addition to manipulation, electrotherapy and massage therapy have also proven to be beneficial options. Often those who experiment with massage therapy notice a decrease in anxiety and feelings of depression almost immediately. Additionally, many notice an increase in the number of quality sleep hours



Many patients are encouraged to see an osteopath for osteopathic manipulative treatment in conjunction with their other treatments. A recent study found that osteopathic manipulative treatment combined with standard medical care was more efficacious in treating FM than just standard care alone.

Trigger point injections are another important option to consider. Used the world over for decades, many patients who previously saw no relief with conservative therapies have shown great results with trigger point injections. Local treatment of the peripheral muscle/joint sources (trigger points) with a variety of topical and non-drug therapies can yield impressive results in achieving better control over widespread fibromyalgia symptoms. Additionally, this is extremely beneficial to medicine-sensitive patients, as there are few, if any, side-effects from these injections.

Many might not realise this, but animal-assisted therapy is a wonderful option for those suffering with fibromyalgia. These highly trained animals are taught to be calm, comforting and obedient – providing all those who interact with them a sense of happiness. Studies even show that animals are able to boost the human body's production of pain-fighters and immune system healers - a great benefit to fibromyalgia patients.

Like some other conditions, diet can often have a noticeable impact on patients. While some suggest cutting down on caffeine late in the afternoon, and others insist that eating more fish can be helpful — it's all about finding the right diet for you. Recent studies have suggested that going 'gluten free' might be a good option, as many who suffer from fibromyalgia also have certain food allergies or intolerances. For those who are allergic or intolerant to gluten, removing it can help with a variety of problems including inflammation and gastrointestinal issues. According to research, this can sometimes alleviate some fibromyalgia symptoms.



Options such as CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy), GET (Graded Exercise Therapy) and Magnets Therapy or Slow-frequency rTMS are also important to consider as part of an effective treatment plan — but really, the possibilities and combinations of treatment are endless. Here at The Fibro Clinic, we know that living with fibromyalgia is extremely challenging — and the key to an effective plan is a proactive and tailored approach to treatment. This is why a multidisciplinary method is key. We make sure to keep abreast of the latest and most promising research, and are dedicated to providing the best possible treatment options for our patients.

Dr Chris Jenner is the leading Pain Consultant at The Fibro Clinic and believes that many of those suffering from the effects of Fibromyalgia can find increased comfort through a multidisciplinary approach to pain relief. With expertise in treating over 90 different pain conditions and detailed research from around the world, Dr Jenner has developed a variety of medical treatments for Fibromyalgia. At The Fibro Clinic, we offer numerous treatments for managing your fibromyalgia, including both pharmacological and non-pharmacological therapies. With the right combination, patients can often see incredible results, and the symptoms of FMS/ME can often be reduced dramatically.

**Website:** [TheFibroClinic.com](http://TheFibroClinic.com)  
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## ASK THE DOCTOR

Doctor Jenner of the Fibro Clinic has agreed to answer readers' questions

If you have any fibromyalgia specific questions that you would like addressed please email your question to [office@UKFibromyalgia.com](mailto:office@UKFibromyalgia.com)

or write to:

**UK Fibromyalgia**  
**7 Ashbourne Road**  
**Bournemouth BH5 2JS**

## Fibromyalgia Survey



Every month at our Face Book Private Group we ask our 15,000+ members a question and report the results back to the magazine. Why not join the community? It is run by friendly moderators (just like you!) ensuring your online experience is safe and fun.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/UKFibromyalgiaPrivate/>

**What is your favourite distraction, when the going gets tough....?**

Pets	180
Reading or Watching TV	121
Art/Crafts	55
Other/None of the above	42
Family Time/Spending time with friends	33
UK Fibromyalgia Facebook Group	20
Bath/Shower	14
Other Online Support Networks/Local Support Group	10
Exercise	5
Baking/Cooking	8