

# Image Awareness Healthletter

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## Lupus, Chronic Fatigue and Fibromyalgia

Anyone who has experienced a serious case of the flu has an idea of what it can feel like to suffer from fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue or chronic viral infections.

Fibromyalgia is an autoimmune phenomena associated with widespread pain and aching of muscles. ("Fibro"—relationship to fibers and "myalgia"—pain in muscles.)

Those who suffer with this problem experience aching, disturbed sleep patterns, fatigue, local tenderness, and morning stiffness. Symptoms are almost identical to chronic fatigue syndrome except that fibromyalgia is characterized by pain and chronic fatigue by fatigue.

This is a relatively recent phenomena as evidenced by the fact that the term fibromyalgia was not adopted as a disease entity until 1990.

### Diagnosis

Diagnosis of fibromyalgia is made with the observation of pain in 11 of 18 predefined tender point sites. The pain must be present for at least 3 months. This disorder is similar to rheumatoid arthritis, although it is not associated with the development of any deformity or inflammation of the joints.

Fibromyalgia is often associated with abnormal sensations on the

skin, headache, digestive and excretory abnormalities, depression, Raynaud's phenomenon, grinding of the teeth, allergies, runny sinuses, bursitis, and sciatica.

Most cases of fibromyalgia are found in middle aged women—80-95% of the sufferers. One survey in Norway found that over 10% of the women evaluated suffered from fibromyalgia.

### Causes

The medical community initially suggested that this problem was psychiatric. Subsequent studies have shown that the anxiety and depression associated with the problem are more a consequence of the problem rather than a cause.

Abnormalities of central nervous system function have been observed with fibromyalgia. Function of the endocrine system is altered including hypothalamus, pituitary, and adrenal. Sleep disorders involve an interruption in stage-4 sleep. Low physical fitness levels may contribute to the problem. Both muscle strength and aerobic capacity are very low.

Most nutritional investigators believe that the problem is associated with autoimmune activity. The precise reason for the autoimmune activity is debated.

### Nutritional Changes

### That Work

#### A Vegetarian Diet

A study of vegetarian diet provided improvement in 70% of subjects after only three weeks. This could be associated with reduction in the intake of inflammatory fats and increased intake of antioxidants from fruits and vegetables. Flavonoids are well known for their anti-inflammatory effects. Carotenoids have been demonstrated to protect the mitochondria from free radical damage. Cruciferous vegetables promote effective detoxification.

#### Digestive Issues

A study designed to reduce food allergy exposure, improve digestion and promote the detoxification ability of the liver resulted in improvement in 81% of patients in one study.

Americans do not treat their digestive tracts kindly. Antibiotics

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can damage or alter the digestive lining. Overeating can pose an immune challenge since approximately ¾ of immune function is associated with protection of the integrity of the digestive tract.

Nutrients important for healthy digestive function include acidophilus, fiber, and vitamin A. In some situations hydrochloric acid (Betagest) and enzymes are helpful as well.

## Allergic Responses to Foods

Identification of foods or chemicals which can elicit immune responses and/or trigger autoimmune activity can be an important aspect of dealing with fibromyalgia.

Foods which frequently create problems include milk products, egg, sugars, wheat, corn, chocolate, and nightshade plants. Any food can potentially create problems, especially if it is consumed frequently.

Allergy testing can be confusing. The most frequently performed tests are scratch tests for immediate hypersensitivity. These tests do not effectively identify the majority of delayed food responses.

Specialized testing such as the ELISA/ACT or ALCAT are necessary for this type of identification. Unfortunately, the tests are expensive and sensitivities can come and go depending upon levels of exposure. Physicians also have little incentive to run blood tests as they do not produce the income flow that in office tests do.

Chemicals can also function as immune triggers. Many food additives can combine with tissues and initiate autoimmune attack against those tissues. This commonly happens with diabetics

when sugar combines with kidney or other tissue and creates problems (glycation). Many food additives have similar potential. Reactions of this type have been referred to as haptan reactions.

Avoidance is the best way to avoid these problems.

## Improved Liver Detoxification

The liver detoxifies harmful substances in two steps. In Phase 1 detox, harmful substances are made more soluble and also more toxic in many instances. In Phase 2 detox, the harmful substances are carried out of the body. Any impairment in detoxification ability can have wide ranging implications.

We are surrounded by a multitude of chemicals today including food additives, solvents, pesticides, herbicides, and heavy metals. Improper handling of these substances by the body can initiate autoimmune activity through complex mechanisms.

Protective nutrients include sulfur containing proteins (Super Ease or Nourishake, Cruciferous Plus, and Allium Plus), B complex vitamins, phospholipids (lecithin and tre-en-en oils), and antioxidants (vitamins C, E, Flavonoid and Carotenoid).

## Hormone Balance

Large numbers of individuals with autoimmune disorders are women. Excessive estrogen levels may contribute. Estrogen tends to switch on immune activity. Since fat cells release estrogen, excessive body fat can contribute to excess estrogen.

Many pollutants in the environment are also of an estrogenic character. These include pesticides, herbicides, and some plastics. Physicians can compound the problem with administration of

potent estrogens. Nutrients which promote more normal estrogen levels include some grain oils (Tre-en-en and Formula IV), B Complex vitamins, fiber, and acidophilus.

## A Program to Prevent Fibromyalgia

1. *Get adequate sleep.* Most Americans are chronically sleep deprived due to artificial lighting, television, computers and other sources of stimulation. Strong electromagnetic fields can also alter sleep and hormone chemistry (eg. Electric blankets). Lack of sleep changes hormone chemistry. Obtaining adequate sleep would tend to prevent some of the hormonal abnormalities associated with fibromyalgia.

2. *Get regular exercise.* Some believe that fibromyalgia is a disorder associated primarily with deconditioning of muscle due to lack of exercise.

3. *Supplement.* Support immune competence with generous intake of vegetables and nutrients including a quality multiple, omega-3 fish oils, and antioxidants like vitamin C, E, and Carotenoids.

4. *Eliminate common immune triggers from the diet.* This would include sugars, chocolate, milk products, and grains (especially wheat and corn).

5. If these measures do not succeed, *consider a comprehensive allergy test.*

ELISA/ACT Clinical Update #10, *Fibromyalgia and Chronic Pain*, Volume 2, Number 4, Winter 1993.

Feingold, Ben, *Why Your Child is Hyperactive*, New York: Random House, 1975, pp. 4-7.

## Letters

*The following letters demonstrate some of the nutritional steps which can be taken to search out the root causes of problems like lupus, chronic fatigue, and fibromyalgia.*

### Chronic Fatigue

In 1991 I found myself overcome with exhaustion and nausea among lesser symptoms. After three months my doctor finally found that one of my hormones, prolactin, was seriously elevated. Well, I wasn't pregnant, and a MRI showed that I didn't have a tumor on my pituitary gland. My doctor could do nothing more for me. It was then that I remembered my friends at GNLD.

You immediately put me on Formula IV (a basic multiple with grain oils to nourish the glands). Up to this point I had been dragging myself around, nodding off for hours in the day, and living on club soda and crackers. After Formula IV, I began to live again. I wasn't healed, but I could get through the whole day and have some energy left for the evening chores. Soon I began taking other GNLD supplements and started feeling even better. Life was returning to normal.

I lived with what I self-diagnosed as CFS (my doctor does not recognize Chronic Fatigue Syndrome) for seven years. I am well now, but I still take the same vitamins as before, because I am convinced that even a "normal" person needs the supplemental nutrition that is missing from our diets, as well as environmental protection.

More recently, I was troubled with tendonitis in both my thumbs. From improper use, I couldn't even pick up my wastepaper

basket. I put myself through therapy and wore braces, but they were still painful. It was then that I was encouraged to take Salmon Oil. I became pain free in a very short time. I use this product regularly for maintenance.

I thank you for your continued support, caring, and encouragement. You and your staff have been a friend to me, and I appreciate your help many times over. -- Teri

*Comment*

*Formula IV contains both grain and legume extracts and naturally sourced B complex vitamins. Both of these can both invigorate the glandular system and also aid the body in establishing a natural balance or "homeostasis" or the glandular system.*

### Lupus

Dear GNLD,

I came to you February of Last year, after being referred to you by a friend. I had a diagnosis of Lupus and the physicians told me I needed to go on medication. I told them I did not want to because of the side effects. The Lupus was so bad I could not even go up or down stairs without serious pain. I could not sit down or kneel when I began the dietary changes and supplements you recommended. My wrists, elbows, knees and ankles were swollen.

You were kind enough to spend time with me describing the nature of the problem. You encouraged me to make different dietary choices. I have avoided nightshade plants, dairy and sugar. I am also avoiding gluten. I had the mercury amalgams removed from my mouth. In addition, I began using Formula IV Plus, Vitamin E and Salmon Oil. These changes made a significant difference in how I felt. Within three months I was a

completely different person.

My ANA test results started to drop. By December of 1999 the test results were back to normal. At this point the doctors are telling me that my Lupus is in complete remission. I am continuing the same diet and supplement program. --Abby

*Comment*

*Abby did a lot of work to improve her immune system, but she had a serious problem. Mercury bonds with sulfur bearing proteins in the tissue. We felt this could have been contributing to the problem in view of the large amount of mercury in the mouth. Sugar can also combine with tissues promoting auto-immune problems.*

*Nightshade plants can create autoimmune-like problems for some people. Milk and wheat are common allergens.*

*Salmon Oil decreases the likelihood of autoimmune activity. Vitamin E is necessary to prevent the oxidation of the Salmon Oil at the tissue level (possibly aggravating the problem). The Formula IV Plus was added to provide a "safety net" and also for the hormone nourishing grain oils.*

### Epstein Barr

Last February I was diagnosed as having Epstein Barr virus with symptoms much like a chronic mononucleosis. Although the diagnosis was new, the miserable symptoms were several years old for me! My energy level was next to nothing -- afternoon naps enabled me to make it through the day. Extreme fatigue, aches and pains, swollen glands, sore throats, and depression were too frequent companions! For three consecutive months last summer I had colds with lingering bronchitis....When we called you for specific recom-

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mendations, you suggested Formula IV, Multi-minerals, and the greatest of all Acidophilus Complex, to rebuild my immune system.

I am delighted to report that only two months later, having been faithful to my new supplemental regime, I have not been once sick! Depression and I no longer keep company. My energy level has at least trippled. As a matter of fact I have recently been working two jobs, six days a week...I really do feel like a new person... --Sherrie

*Comment:*

*Sherrie was given extra minerals because of research indicating that deficiencies in some minerals such as iodine and selenium can contribute to chronic viral infections. She seemed to respond most to acidophilus. There is some research which indicates that dysbiosis or the wrong bacteria in the digestive tract can contribute to autoimmune phenomena.*

**recently caught up with the company and fined them \$375,000. Analysis of the product indicated it was nothing more than salt water. Townsend Letter for Doctors and Patients, July 2000, p. 27.**

**“Vitamin O”**

**Who has not seen the nationally advertised “vitamin O” which supposedly prevents cancer, heart disease, and lung disease. A two-ounce bottle sold for about \$20.00. The Federal Trade Commission**