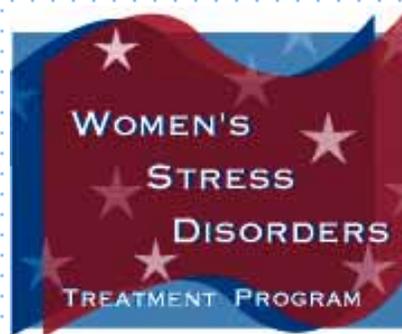


Fibromyalgia



The basics



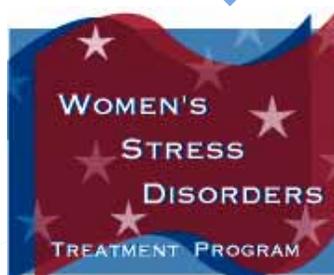
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What is fibromyalgia?

According to the Arthritis Foundation, a fibromyalgia (FM) diagnosis is based on having all of these symptoms:

- A history of widespread pain on both sides of the body, above and below the waist, present for at least three months
- Pain in at least 11 of 18 tender point sites and in all four quadrants of the body

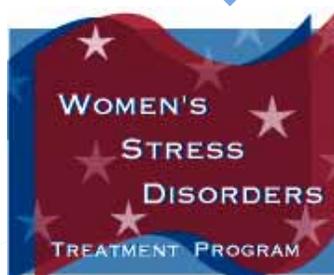


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What are “tender points”?

- ◆ These are areas of the body that are very sensitive to pressure.
- ◆ These are the most common areas in which people experience pain, but often people with FM have pain in other areas as well.

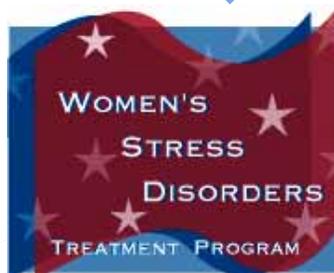


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Does this cause damage?

- ◆ No. Unlike arthritis, FM does not damage joints or cause inflammation. Although FM tends to remain an issue once you have it, it doesn't cause progressive damage and is not life-threatening.
- ◆ FM is considered a soft-tissue rheumatism by doctors.

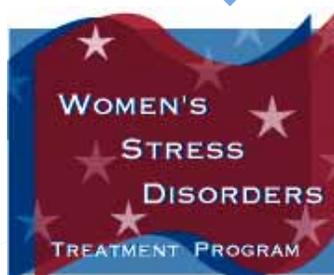


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Will it ever improve?

According to Daniel J. Wallace, people who are diagnosed early and take steps to manage their symptoms are likely to improve.

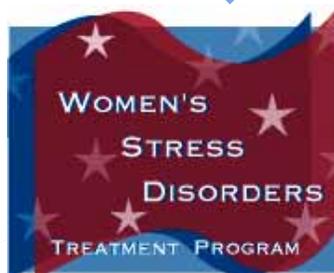


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What's involved in managing symptoms?

- ◆ Having a healthy diet
- ◆ Reducing alcohol intake
- ◆ Quitting smoking
- ◆ Engaging in some physical activity and exercise
- ◆ Reducing stress
- ◆ Learning to work well with medical providers

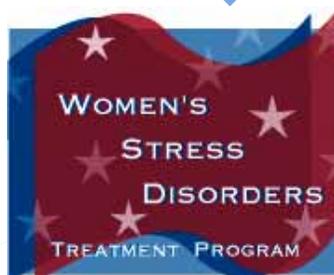


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What problems do people with fibromyalgia face most often?

- ◆ Pain seems to be the most common and most distressing problem.
- ◆ Fatigue - between 60 and 80 percent of people with FM complain of moderate to severe fatigue. This can include feeling listless, mentally exhausted, sleepy, or waking up feeling tired.

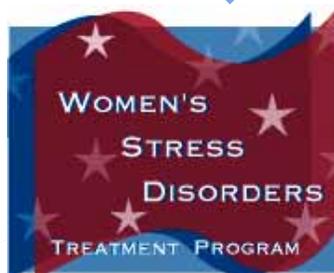


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What else?

- ◆ Sleep problems are also common. It may be hard to fall asleep or stay asleep. People with FM seem to have difficulty getting deep (what scientists call “delta”) sleep.
- ◆ Mood changes including depression and anxiety sometimes accompany FM.

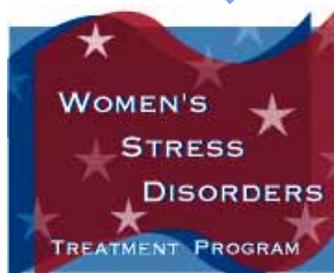


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Continued...

- ◆ Some people with FM may feel confused, have difficulty remembering things or have a hard time concentrating. This seems to be associated with poor sleep.
- ◆ Other problems sometimes occur in combination with FM, including irritable bowel syndrome, headaches, or temporomandibular joint disorder (TMJ).

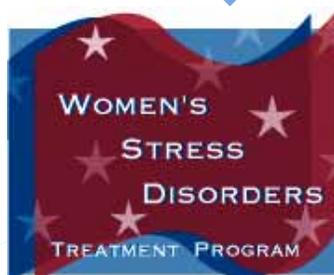


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Who tends to get fibromyalgia?

- ◆ About 2% of Americans, or one in 50.
- ◆ Women between the ages of 40 and 75 are most likely, though younger women, men and children may also have FM.
- ◆ Sometimes it occurs in more than one family member, but scientists have not yet found a genetic link.

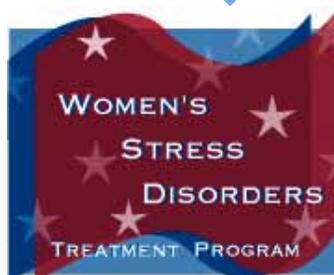


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***How come no one told me
years ago this pain
was fibromyalgia?***

- ◆ Diagnosing FM involves ruling out other conditions first, which is often a long process.
- ◆ FM does not show up on x-rays or in lab tests.
- ◆ FM as a diagnosis is relatively new, so some doctors may not have known about it until recently.

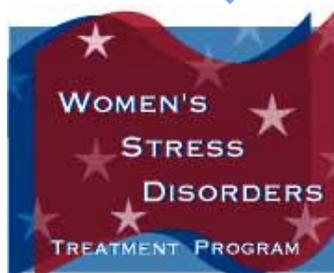


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What causes fibromyalgia?

- ◆ The short answer is that scientists do not know for sure.
- ◆ Some think an injury, physical or emotional, may change the central nervous system's response to pain.
- ◆ Others believe hormonal changes or infections may trigger FM.

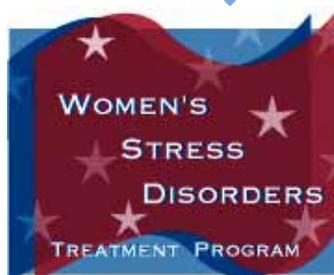


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Causes, continued...

- ◆ Some researchers are exploring whether lack of exercise or too much exercise may be the cause.
- ◆ Sleep disturbance may also be a cause.
- ◆ Although depression and FM tend to go together, we don't know if depression causes or is the result of FM.

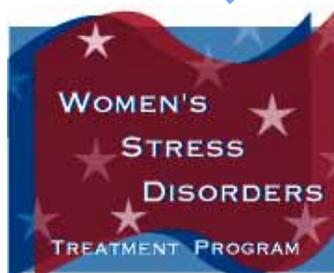


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Possible causes, continued...

- ◆ People with FM may process hormones differently than those people without FM.
- ◆ The hormones being investigated regarding their possible role in FM include:
 - Substance P
 - Serotonin
 - Hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) hormones
 - Growth hormones

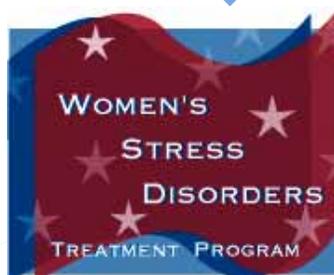


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The mind-body link

- ◆ People's bodies sometimes express feelings and stress through physical symptoms.
- ◆ FM is a condition that is very influenced by feelings and stress.
- ◆ It is one of the syndromes called "functional somatic syndromes" (other examples are irritable bowel syndrome and chronic fatigue syndrome).

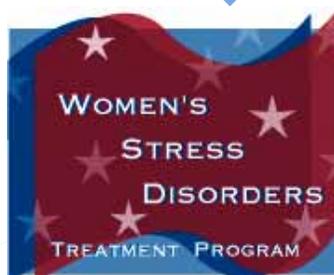


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So it's all in my head?

- ◆ Definitely not.
- ◆ Everyone's body is affected by emotions and stress, but some people's bodies seem to react more intensely than others.



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