Navigating Fibromyalgia and Sex

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What You Need to Know About Fibromyalgia and Sex

If you suffer from fibromyalgia you're likely to have some trouble with your sex life, since the condition affects sexual health in a number of ways. Let's look at the link between fibromyalgia and sex, the many health benefits of sex, as well as some tips to spice up your sex life.

How Fibromyalgia Affects Sex Drive

The most common complaint associated with fibromyalgia is loss of sex drive. The libido may be healthy in some cases, but muscle pain and fatigue do not allow you to fully enjoy sex. The stress, anxiety and depression that accompany this condition all have a significant impact on sex life, and certain medications (i.e. Cymbalta, Savella, Paxil or Zoloft) can reduce your sex drive.

Because all these factors can trigger problems, it is best to talk to your doctor. He or she will evaluate the exact cause and treat it accordingly. For example, the medication can be replaced with other drugs that are less likely to cause sexual dysfunction. Pain, sleeping problems and mood symptoms can also improve with drugs, exercising regularly or seeking psychological counseling.

Why Sex Is Important for Your Health

There are so many health benefits from having — and enjoying — sex on a regular basis. Sex boosts the immune system and even makes you look younger and increases your lifespan, according to several research studies.

One study found male patients who had frequent orgasms had a 50 percent reduction in mortality rate, while other studies have found that regular sex can add several years to your life.

During sex feel-good chemicals like endorphins, dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin are released in your body. These substances not only improve your emotional well-being, but have pain killer qualities and therefore can fight muscular pain as well.

Additionally, sex is a form a cardio exercise — perhaps one of the most pleasurable forms of exercise — meaning your heart and entire body will work better with regular bedroom sessions. Sex also helps you sleep better and strengthens your relationship with your partner.

Tips to Spice Up Your Sex Life

Fibromyalgia and sex can go together — don't give up! Talk to your partner and find sexual positions that are comfortable for you and accommodate your muscle pain. If your back hurts, you should avoid lying on your back, or if you have hip pain you may want to use a pillow between your knees.

Soaking in a warm bath before sexual intercourse may also be beneficial, as heat relieves muscle aches and improve the blood flow in your body. If you don’t want to take a warm bath, you can also use heat applications (like a heating pad or wheat bag) on tender points.

See your doctor to evaluate whether or not your current treatment can be improved so you experience fewer symptoms. You could also consider sex therapy, which is a form of counseling with a focus on intimacy and sexual health.

You can attend sex therapy sessions on your own or with your partner. Sex therapists are usually psychologists, psychiatrists or marriage counselors who receive additional training in this field, and can help you maximize your potential for sexual satisfaction and happiness.