# Do Men Get Fibromyalgia?

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## Is Fibromyalgia in Men Different?

Many people believe that fibromyalgia is a woman's disease. In fact, men do get fibromyalgia, though not at the rate of occurrence seen in women. It is unknown why women suffer from it more often than men.

People with certain biological markers are predisposed to fibromyalgia. Fibro patients of both genders have been found to have a higher level of substance P, a neurotransmitter that signals pain. To make things worse, their level of serotonin is lower than average; this neurotransmitter is responsible for inhibiting pain. Genetics and hormones also have a role in bringing the disease out or making it worse. Women are more likely to experience more pain because estrogen reduces the pain threshold. The heightened sensitivity to pain may be why the odds are greater for women to be diagnosed with fibromyalgia.

### How Fibromyalgia Affects Men

Men often have less severe fibromyalgia symptoms than women do. They may not have as much pain and it will be in fewer places; they often don't have the complaint of "hurting all over" like female fibromyalgia patients do. They also don't experience as much fatigue. They do, however, experience many of the other conditions and symptoms that accompany fibro, including irritable bowel syndrome, chronic fatigue, difficulty sleeping and restless leg syndrome. Memory problems are apparent and it can become very difficult to concentrate at times.

### Undiagnosed Fibromyalgia Cases in Men

There may be more cases of fibromyalgia in men then we know about, as men are less likely to go to the doctor than women. It is usually gender-based stereotyping that influences this trend – men are raised to think they should not admit to any weakness, that they shouldn't complain of pain or discomfort lest they be viewed as less of a man. It is estimated that up to 20% of men with fibromyalgia are undiagnosed.

If you think you may have fibromyalgia, it is important to see a doctor as soon as possible. By putting it off, you put yourself more at risk of developing complications. This means your work could be affected as well as any hobbies and other important things in your life. You could also be putting your mental health as risk. Depression is a common ailment that crops up among men who delay getting an answer to their health problems. Work with your doctor to get the proper diagnosis and treatment. The sooner this is done, the better you will feel so that you can enjoy life again.

### Managing Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia cannot be cured, but it can be managed. Medications can help control the symptoms and lifestyle changes can help in a big way. Being overweight can increase the pain and fatigue that accompanies fibromyalgia, so adding exercise to your daily regimen and eating better will help lessen these symptoms.