10 Less Common Fibromyalgia Symptoms

by SARAH BORIEN

Lesser Known Fibro Symptoms

Most people who suffer from fibromyalgia are familiar with the condition's many common symptoms. These include pain, fatigue, fibro fog, depression, anxiety, stiffness and irritable bowel syndrome. It's likely that if you suffer from fibromyalgia, you will suffer from most – if not all – of these symptoms.

However, unfortunately, the list of symptoms doesn't stop there. There are many other effects – mental and physical – that fibromyalgia patients experience, some more common than others.

Which of these less common fibromyalgia symptoms do you suffer from? How do you cope?

1. Chest Pain

Sharp pain in your chest is a worrying feeling and shouldn't be ignored as it can often be an unrelated health issue. However, it's often associated with fibromyalgia, as the chest is one of the trigger points where fibro patients experience pain.

Sometimes this can lead to a shortness of breath, but more commonly it is a sharp pain in the chest area without any other side effects. Gentle exercises and deep breathing can help ease this pain, as can heat and gentle massage.

2. Dry Skin and Itching

Dry skin and itching is another symptom some fibromyalgia patients experience. Often skin can appear flaky and dry and those dry areas often become itchy. If you scratch at your skin, a fibromyalgia rash can then appear or the skin feels bruised.

Apparently the itchiness may be a result of pain signals being misunderstood by the brain, so it's important to keep your skin moisturized and try to avoid scratching.

3. Tingling and Numbness

I think this is one of the more common lesser known symptoms. Tingling and muscle numbness, also known as paresthesia, commonly exists in the hands and feet as a result of extensive use, and rest or massage can sometimes help this.

However, your tingling can be caused by anxiety as a result of shortness of breath causing reduced blood flow. Deep breathing can often be found to improve fibromyalgia paresthesia.

4. Excessive Sweating

This occurs as a result of an autonomic dysfunction in the area of the brain that controls sweating, bowel movements and other body functions. It can occur as a side effect of fibromyalgia and therefore requires fibro patients to carefully control their body temperature – something we are often used to as many fibro sufferers find heat/cold impacts our pain.

Next page: poor balance, heightened sensitivity, severe PMS, and three more less common fibro symptoms.

5. Poor Balance and Spacial Disorientation

Losing balance is a frequent occurrence for some fibromyalgia sufferers. It is believed this is because we carry less lower body strength and our legs are less stable. Because of that, we are less able to steady ourselves when there is a risk of falling.

Not only that, but the risk of falling is often increased due to spacial disorientation (sometimes an effect of fibro fog) and other balance-related side effects like ringing in the ears or blurred vision.

6. Heightened Sensitivity

Heightened sensitivity to touch, also known as allodynia, results in pain from things that wouldn't normally cause you discomfort. Hyperalgesia is the term for feeling extreme pain. These two conditions as part of fibromyalgia can lead to immense discomfort.

For example, something that causes some pain such as stubbing your toe or knocking your elbow can be excruciating to a fibro patient, and something that shouldn't hurt at all like a friend patting you on the back when greeting you can cause great pain.

7. Severe PMS

It's common for female fibromyalgia patients to experience more pain than usual during their period. Generally women suffer from pain and increased sensitivity at this time, so it's not surprising that things become even worse for those of us with fibro.

The part of your nervous system responsible for regulating your periods is sensitive to any changes that your body experiences, so controlling your pain management during your period can be difficult.

8. Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction (TMJ)

TMJ is a problem that causes pain in the facial muscles and jaw and can sometimes be partnered with grinding of the teeth. In other cases, pain caused by TMJ can spread to the neck and head and can result in facial swelling or muscle spasm.

This can occur in fibro patients and pain can be even worse than normal, but it can be treated by your dentist so you should seek further help.

9.Cold Hands and Feet

The cold weather is often difficult for fibro patients, and due to our temperature sensitivity it can be hard to warm up. Some of us experience freezing cold hands and feet which leads to increased pain. Keeping your extremities as warm as possible is essential during this time – even if it means wearing gloves in the summer time.

10. Restless Leg Syndrome

RLS is a condition which causes people to uncontrollably move their legs, often during sleep. It is estimated that 33% of fibro patients suffer from RLS – in comparison to just 3.1% of the rest of the population. RLS commonly disturbs sleep, so this often causes further sleep and fatigue problems for Fibro patients.

How many of these do you suffer from, and what other lesser known symptoms have you experienced?