9 Possible Fibromyalgia Flare-Up Triggers

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Fibromyalgia Triggers

Those of us dealing with fibromyalgia sometimes wonder if anyone truly understands us, and we are often put off by the topic of flare-ups because truth be told, each day has its own degree of obstacles and the notion of flare-ups is relative to the person dealing with them. So, how do we avoid fibromyalgia triggers or at the very least mitigate through them?

A crucial step to avoiding flare-ups or mitigating through them is to develop a basic understanding of what might cause them in the first place. With that knowledge, you might be able to avoid them or at the very least, minimize their intensity.

Below are some of the main culprits behind the onset of a fibromyalgia flare-up.

1. Being Overly Active

Oh the joy of a day when we feel almost normal with minimal pain and an adequate amount of energy and stamina! While we bask in the blessing, we can become like a child on Halloween night after trick-or-treating.

Just because you have a full bucket of candy does not mean it is a good idea to eat it all in one sitting! The same goes for those up days in our journey with fibromyalgia; trying to do it all on those days when we feel better is one of the surest ways to thrust ourselves into a full-blown flare-up the next day.

2. Poor Sleep

For many reasons, those dealing with fibromyalgia struggle with getting a good night’s sleep. Pain and imbalances in our system inhibit us from reaching that deep level of sleep, and insufficient serotonin results in a fitful night of unrest and fibromyalgia night sweats that can trigger a fibromyalgia flare-up.

3. Secondary Illnesses

Many of us dealing with fibromyalgia also deal with a cluster of other illnesses or conditions, all of which can exasperate the effects of fibromyalgia. In addition, unexpected illnesses, like viral or bacterial infections, can bring on a flare-up.

4. Changes in Medications

Many who deal with fibromyalgia find themselves periodically changing medications as the body seems to become immune to the effectiveness of most every medication over time. Some medications can produce a flare-up as your body adjusts.

5. Weather Changes

I never really believed in the feel it in my bones theory until I was diagnosed with fibromyalgia. I began noticing flare-ups as the weather changed.

My doctor explained that those dealing with fibromyalgia have a difficult time regulating body temperature based on external environment.

6. Food Sensitivities

This culprit is one many overlook, but can be a huge contributing factor to how you feel from day to day and whether or not you experience a flare-up.

Case in point — last week my son decided to pick up fast food from a burger place. I ate a large fry and half a regular double cheeseburger. Within a few hours, I felt as if I had been run over by a truck and it lasted for three days!

7. Over Stimulation

Perhaps you have had an evening at a loud concert or an action-packed movie — stimulation of the senses can trigger a flare-up.

8. Stress

Stress can do a number on a healthy individual, nonetheless one dealing with fibromyalgia. Stressors can be something as simple as planning a special dinner for the family to working on our taxes or preparing for a work meeting.

Life stresses happen regardless, and understanding how they can trigger flare-ups will provide a better understanding as to how to mitigate through times of flare-ups.

9. Special Events

When there is a special event, such as a family reunion, a wedding, holiday, vacation, etc., the extra energy required to plan, implement or even just participate in the event can push you into a full-blown flare-up.

An Ounce of Prevention

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. This advice is invaluable for anyone who has had to deal with the cruel effects of a flare-up. There are things you can do to avoid frequent relapses:

- **Pace yourself.** Learn to cut back on activity levels, have shorter activity periods and be realistic in setting your schedule each day.
- **Rest.** If you learn to take scheduled rests during your daily routine, chances are you can offset flare-ups.
- **Keep a journal.** Keeping records of how you feel during certain days, events, after certain foods, following activities and more can help you create a successful plan in avoiding future flare-ups.
- **Make mental adjustments.** In order to develop new habits, it is important to define expectations of where you are now rather than where you used to be.
- **Listen to your body.** Over time, you begin to recognize your body’s signals. Listen and don’t push through anyway.
- **Stand up.** Be your own best cheerleader and advocate by standing up for yourself.
- **Treasure solitude.** Consider time alone like recharging your batteries. Time alone doesn’t always mean resting or sleeping, but it can be reading a book, listening to music, taking a bubble bath or just quiet moments of meditation or reflection.

- **Have fun.** Don’t allow pain, fatigue or limitations define you.