Do People With Fibromyalgia Heal Slower Than Others?

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Fibromyalgia and Slow Healing Wounds

Who of us haven't had a simple scratch or scrape on their skin? They heal up quickly right? Well if you are like me and many others with fibromyalgia, you my find you do not heal as quickly as you should.

Before we can delve into why that is, we must first understand the rudimentary facts of how a scratch or cut heals.

The Healing Process

When you first get a wound, blood platelets stick together, forming a clot. Then a scab forms over the wound to allow the skin cells underneath time to heal.

The new skin cells go to work multiplying, repairing damaged blood vessels, and using infection-fighting white blood cells to attack any germs. However, if any of these elements are not functioning properly inside of your body, the healing process may not happen as it should.

My Experience and Search for Answers

I have noticed this myself on many occasions. Most recently when, while attempting to pull the stroller out of the back of my vehicle while holding my baby (who was only a few months old at the time), I scraped the top of my foot with the stroller.

Of course this scratch hurt more than it should have, as is typical with fibromyalgia, but soon the pain was gone and I didn’t think much more of it. It had scraped off a good amount of skin, but it hadn’t even bled — surely it wasn’t a big deal.

However, months have passed by and that scratch is still just as visible as ever. My baby is now over a year old and that scratch doesn’t look much different than it did a couple of weeks after I originally got it.

I was curious, as I often am, if this was yet another odd manifestation of fibromyalgia and I began to do research. Sadly, I found very little information connecting slow healing wounds with fibromyalgia.

What I did find was personal testimony of individuals with the same problem that I had. Unfortunately, when you have an illness as misunderstood as fibromyalgia is, sometimes that is the best you have to go on.

I raised the question on Twitter, and as usual the spoonie community was happy to share their experiences. I had reply after reply of individuals who also suffered with wounds that didn’t heal as quickly as they should. Another common complaint is fibromyalgia bruising and scarring easily.

The respondents had a wide range of illnesses, but the common factor was that all these illnesses affect the

immune system. This could be a key to what causes our bodies to heal at a slower pace.

How Fibromyalgia May Affect the Healing Process

If our blood and skin cells do not work the way they should, it is a logical conclusion that we are not able to recover from a cut or a scratch at the same speed as someone with healthy cells.

It is possible something in our cells are misfiring. There appears to be a particular issue with our mitochondria, the powerhouse of our cells. The mitochondria are what produce energy for the cells to do their job.

It is believed by some that people with fibromyalgia may suffer with mitochondria dysfunction. This could explain many of our symptoms, including slow healing, in addition to increased scarring and bruising.

There is not much concrete evidence, as with many theories involving fibromyalgia. There also is some disagreement among doctors regarding this theory.

What Can We Do?

- **Proper wound care.** Make sure to clean any cuts or scratches and keep ointment and a bandage on it, giving it a better chance of healing, as well as protecting against infection. If it looks infected see a doctor right away.
- **Try lysine.** Lysine is an essential amino acid and can help speed up the healing process. Talk with your doctor or do research to insure it is okay for you to take and won't interfere with any medication or supplements you are taking.

Fibromyalgia is so much more than pain; there are numerous odd symptoms associated with this life-altering illness. Even if doctors are not able to understand what causes it all, it is a relief that we can turn to others in our community to share experiences. It is a relief to know we are not alone.