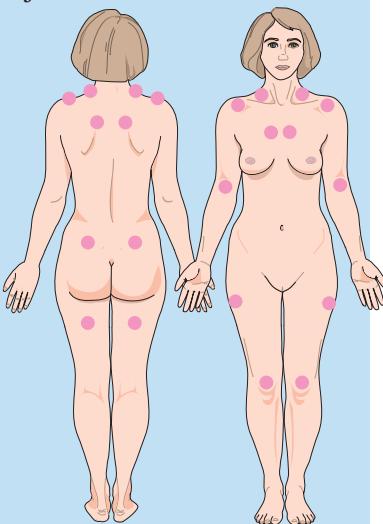




**Fibromyalgia** is a chronic, arthritis-like illness. It affects the muscles, not the joints.



*Tender points of fibromyalgia*

## Treatment

- Exercise therapy.
- Medication to treat symptoms.
- Massage therapy.



Get more information from:

National Institute of  
Arthritis and  
Musculoskeletal and  
Skin Diseases (NIAMS)  
[www.niams.nih.gov](http://www.niams.nih.gov)

## Fibromyalgia

### Signs & Symptoms

- Chronic widespread pain on both sides of the body. This lasts for at least 3 months. It is not due to any other problem. Muscle pain can be severe.
- Pain in 11 or more of 22 “tender points.” (These are shown at left.)
- Fatigue. Disturbed sleep. Anxiety. Depression.

These symptoms are also linked to fibromyalgia:

- Memory lapses. Problems concentrating. Feeling confused.
- Chronic headaches. Jaw pain. A tingling feeling in the limbs.
- Irritable bowel. Swelling and pain in the abdomen. Gas. Constipation. Diarrhea.

### Causes

The exact cause is not known. Factors thought to play a role include:

- An illness caused by an infection. Emotional or physical trauma.
- Hormones. Women are affected more often than men.
- Brain chemicals and muscles don't function like they should.

### Questions to Ask

Does a person with fibromyalgia have severe pain, depression, or anxiety? Is prescribed treatment not helping?



NO

Do symptoms get worse or do you have new symptoms?



YES



### Self-Care / Prevention

- Follow the treatment plan advised by your doctor.
- Use biofeedback. Use relaxation techniques. Meditate.
- Take warm baths. Use a heating pad. Massage sore muscles.