



# Fibromyalgia, also called fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS), is a long-term condition that causes pain all over the body.

You have been given this as you or a loved one has recently been given a diagnosis of fibromyalgia by a Rheumatologist or your GP. This leaflet provides information on locally available support and treatment options for fibromyalgia.

## Symptoms of fibromyalgia

As well as widespread pain, people with fibromyalgia may also have:

- increased sensitivity to pain
- extreme tiredness (fatigue)
- muscle stiffness
- difficulty sleeping
- problems with mental processes (known as “fibro-fog”), such as problems with memory and concentration
- [headaches](#)
- [irritable bowel syndrome \(IBS\)](#), a digestive condition that causes stomach pain and bloating
- There may be other associated symptoms such as palpitations and shortness of breath.

## How fibromyalgia is treated

Although there’s currently no cure for fibromyalgia, there are treatments to help relieve some of the symptoms and make the condition easier to live with.

Treatment tends to be a combination of:

- medicine, such as [antidepressants](#) and painkillers
- talking therapies, such as [cognitive behavioural therapy \(CBT\)](#) and [counselling](#)
- lifestyle changes, such as exercise programmes and relaxation techniques
- Mind body practices’ such as yoga and tai chi and also mindfulness meditation

Exercise in particular has been found to have a number of important benefits for people with fibromyalgia, including helping to reduce pain.

## What causes fibromyalgia?

The exact cause of fibromyalgia is unknown, but it’s thought to be related to abnormal levels of certain chemicals in the brain and changes in the way the central nervous system (the brain, spinal cord and nerves) processes pain messages carried around the body.

Anyone can develop fibromyalgia. It typically develops between the ages of 30 and 50 and affects more women than men. There’s no specific test for the condition, and the symptoms can be similar to a number of other conditions.



Follow this QR code to watch an expert talking about fibromyalgia providing more information and options to help effectively manage the condition.



**South East London**  
Clinical Commissioning Group

This pathway has been co-designed with patients with a diagnosis of fibromyalgia, by Bromley Well, Rheumatology, Vita Health Group and South East London CCG.



## Advice and guidance



### [National advice and support networks](#)

[Pharmacists](#) are qualified healthcare professionals who can offer clinical advice regarding medications. If you're taking lots of different medicines, you may be able to have a Medicines Use Review with your pharmacist to help you work out when you should be taking your medication and discuss any questions or side effects.



### [UK Fibromyalgia](#)

Including access to The [Fibromyalgia Magazine](#) (formerly FaMily Magazine) The independent voice of UK Fibromyalgia.



Fibromyalgia Action UK  
[Fibromyalgia Action UK](#)

## Peer to peer support

**Bromley Well**

### [Bromley Well: Fibromyalgia Patient support group](#)

The Fibromyalgia Support Group meets from 11am to 12:30pm on the last Friday of every month at Community House, South Street, Bromley BR1 1RH

Due to current Covid-19 restrictions this is currently taking place online.

### HealthUnlocked

The world's largest social network for health

[HealthUnlocked](#)

## Physical and talking therapies support



### [Vita Health Group: MSK service](#)

Access to 1:1 physiotherapy and group exercise including a digital pain management pathway



### [Bromley Health Care: IAPT services](#)

This includes access to counselling, cognitive behaviour therapy, and pain management groups. You can self-refer to this service or be referred by a professional

## Patient quotes



*"The condition affects people of all ages. We need to tell them about the support that is available as they can get more anxious if they don't understand the symptoms."*



*"I have managed to reduce all my many medications down to just one which has made me feel much better about myself. The pain is still there but I'm keeping active and feel in a better place because of it."*



*"Peer support is so helpful, everyone gets a chance to speak."*



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