

FOODS TO EAT & AVOID FOR FIBROMYALGIA

HOW TO HARNESS FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE TO
SUPPORT YOUR INNATE HEALING SYSTEM



BY DR. JOHN DEMPSTER, Bsc. (Hons), ND, FAAHP

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Introduction

Living with an incurable disease like Fibromyalgia can be scary and stressful. After months and years of diagnosis and treatment it is easy to lose hope and fall in despair. But you should know that there is hope.



Fibromyalgia is a chronic disorder characterized by widespread musculoskeletal pain, fatigue, and tenderness in localized areas. It affects around 2-4% of the population and is more common in women than men. The exact cause of fibromyalgia is not well understood, but research suggests that it may involve changes in the way the brain processes pain signals. Other factors that may contribute to fibromyalgia include genetics, infections, diet, toxins, and traumatic events.

While conventional medicine can provide symptomatic relief through medications such as painkillers and antidepressants, many people with fibromyalgia seek out alternative therapies to help manage their symptoms. Functional medicine, a holistic approach to healthcare that aims to address the underlying causes of disease, is gaining popularity as a promising option for those with fibromyalgia.

There are a number of things you can do or avoid doing to support and soothe your symptoms and make living with Fibromyalgia more manageable.

I get many questions from patients who are diagnosed with Fibromyalgia about the best ways to manage the symptoms and lifestyle and diet tips to improve the symptoms. So, I decided to put together a brief report that will answer some of your questions.

With this guide I want to show you that Fibromyalgia is not always a permanent sentence and there are things you can do to make your life better. I hope reading this will help eliminate your fears and reduce any anxiety you have associated with this condition.

While there may not be a one-size-fits-all ‘cure’ for Fibromyalgia, there are several options that have been shown to help you improve your symptoms and get your quality of life back. One of them is to naturally address the underlying problems (blind spots) that are causing your symptoms through a smart and healthful diet and lifestyle tailored to you.

As you read this, please remember – my primary concern is for your health and safety.

After reading this guide, you will be better equipped to deal with your symptoms by treating some of the underlying imbalances common in those with Fibromyalgia. You will also learn about how medical professionals can help you in this process and why The Dempster Clinic – Center for Functional Medicine is a wonderful place to start your journey to a healthier, happier and less painful life.

Because Fibromyalgia has a wide range of symptoms that can be confused with other conditions, the first important step is to get an official diagnosis from a qualified medical professional. The Dempster Clinic – Center for Functional Medicine has a long history of working with people with Fibromyalgia.

You can find even more information on my website at thedempsterclinic.com. And if you have any further questions, please email admin@thedempsterclinic.com.

To your health and wellness,

Dr. John Dempster, ND

Living with Fibromyalgia

If you have widespread musculoskeletal pain, combined with symptoms like fatigue, sleep, memory and mood issues you might be suffering from Fibromyalgia. Fibromyalgia can develop over time or appear quickly after a painful event, like surgery and increase your sensitivity, leaving you vulnerable to all sources of pain.

Primary symptoms of Fibromyalgia include:

- *Widespread pain across your body, which could be more intense in particular areas*
- *Cognitive difficulties, including problems with thinking, concentration and memory*
- *Tender points: specific areas on your body that are particularly sensitive to pressure, such a neck, shoulders, chest, hips and knees*
- *Fatigue even after resting for an extended period of time*
- *Tingling sensation in limbs*
- *Digestive problems like bloating, constipation, abdominal pain, IBS*

These value signs of bodily distress can make it difficult to diagnose Fibromyalgia – you might be inclined to think that you are simply tired or need to exercise more. But understanding the underlying reasons for your condition goes hand in hand with diagnosis and resolving the issue.

What is Fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia is a complex disorder of the central nervous system that is characterized by widespread musculoskeletal pain, fatigue, sleep disturbances, and tenderness in localized areas.



The underlying cause of fibromyalgia is not yet fully understood, but existing research suggests that it may be related to abnormalities in the way the brain and spinal cord process pain signals. Research also suggests that it is caused by a combination of some factors. Here are some factors that can trigger the disease:

- **Genetic factors** – studies indicate that the disease tends to run in the family. However, no specific genes have been linked to this condition yet.
- **Environmental factors** – such as exposure to environmental toxins (ie.: mercury, lead, GMO's, pesticides, herbicides, etc
- **Neurological factors** – there is some evidence that people with Fibromyalgia have lower levels of neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which are involved in regulating mood, pain perception and sleep. People with fibromyalgia may have changes in the way their brains process pain signals. This can cause increased sensitivity to pain and other stimuli.
- **Trauma** - Physical or emotional trauma, such as car accidents, surgeries, or psychological stress, may trigger the onset of fibromyalgia in some people.
- **Infections** - Some infections, such as viral or bacterial infections, may trigger the onset of fibromyalgia in some people. Many of these can lie dormant in the body and not be evident from a traditional infection set of symptoms.
- **Sleep disorders** - Fibromyalgia is often associated with sleep disturbances, such as insomnia, sleep apnea, or simply not getting enough sleep electively.
- **Hormonal imbalances** - Hormonal imbalances, such as those that occur during menopause, chronic stress, thyroid, etc may contribute to the development of fibromyalgia.
- **Autoimmune disorders** - Fibromyalgia is sometimes associated with autoimmune disorders, such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus, and others.

It is impossible to pinpoint to a single trigger that causes Fibromyalgia and usually, it is a combination of these factors that cause the disorder. Similar to a hurricane, it is a number of smaller 'storms' coming together creating a 'superstorm'.

Currently, there is no cure for Fibromyalgia but treatment can help manage symptoms and improve quality of life. Effective treatment options often include a combination of; medications, lifestyle and dietary changes, physical therapy, massage, cognitive-behavioral therapy. There is a growing body of evidence supporting a functional medicine approach that can bring further insights, thus a more customized treatment to help reduce fibromyalgia symptoms.

Link to Other Medical Conditions

Similar to autoimmune and gut issues, Fibromyalgia is also associated with other medical conditions that often appear together as a package. Some medical conditions that have been linked to fibromyalgia include:

1. **Chronic fatigue syndrome:** a disorder characterized by persistent fatigue that doesn't go away with rest. Many people with fibromyalgia also have this condition
2. **Irritable bowel syndrome:** a condition that affects the large intestine and causes symptoms such as abdominal pain, bloating, and changes in bowel movements.
3. **Temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorder:** which affects jaw joint and muscles that control jaw movement.
4. **Rheumatoid arthritis:** similar to Fibromyalgia, Rheumatoid arthritis also causes chronic pain in joints, however unlike Fibromyalgia, it is caused by chronic inflammation in your body.
5. **Systemic lupus erythematosus:** which is an autoimmune disorder that can affect multiple organs and tissues in the body, causing symptoms such as joint pain, fatigue, and skin rashes. Fibromyalgia is common among people suffering from systemic lupus erythematosus.
6. **Migraines:** Fibromyalgia patients may also suffer from migraines or other types of headaches.
7. **Depression and anxiety:** Fibromyalgia is often associated with depression and anxiety, which can exacerbate symptoms of the condition.
8. **Multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS):** MCS is a condition in which a person is highly sensitive to certain chemicals and may experience symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, and dizziness. It is often seen in patients with fibromyalgia.

While many of these diseases share symptoms with Fibromyalgia and appear together, it is important to note that each condition has its own specific management needs.

What Does Research Say?

There is an active and ongoing research surrounding Fibromyalgia and science has made some progress in recent years. Thank to that, there are several things related to Fibromyalgia that we are certain about:

1. Fibromyalgia is a real medical condition. While many medical practitioners might disregard Fibromyalgia symptoms and take it lightly, today science acknowledges that it is a real disorder with millions of people who suffer from it.
2. Fibromyalgia predominantly occurs in women, with around 80-90% of cases occurring in women.
3. Fibromyalgia is often misdiagnosed and it might take a patient years to get proper diagnosis and treatment.
4. Fibromyalgia is a complex and multifactorial condition: Current research suggests that fibromyalgia is not a single disorder, but rather a complex condition that involves multiple factors such as genetic predisposition, central nervous system dysfunction, inflammation, and environmental triggers.
5. Fibromyalgia is associated with altered pain processing: People with fibromyalgia experience heightened pain sensitivity and altered pain processing, which may contribute to the widespread pain and tenderness associated with the condition.
6. Fibromyalgia is often comorbid with other conditions: Fibromyalgia is often seen in conjunction with other conditions such as chronic fatigue syndrome, irritable bowel syndrome, depression, anxiety, and autoimmune diseases.
7. Lifestyle interventions can improve fibromyalgia symptoms: Studies have shown that lifestyle interventions such as exercise, stress management, and dietary changes can improve fibromyalgia symptoms, including pain, fatigue, and mood.
8. Personalized treatment approaches may be more effective: Fibromyalgia is a highly individualized condition, and treatments that work for one person may not work for another. Personalized treatment approaches that address the unique needs of each patient may be more effective than a one-size-fits-all approach.

Ways to Address Fibromyalgia

Managing Fibromyalgia symptoms often involves a multifaceted approach that includes medication, lifestyle changes and other therapies. Here are some strategies that can help you detect and manage your symptoms.

A. Functional medicine Lab Testing

There are many lab tests that can be considered to help create a more complete picture as to what the root causes of Fibromyalgia are. To eliminate other conditions and assess your overall health level, you might be asked to get several blood including; blood, urine, saliva, stool, and even breath tests to help provide a complete picture. These will give your doctor additional information, which can be extremely useful, especially since Fibromyalgia is often linked to many imbalances.

B. Medications

Medications can be useful to manage some of the symptoms. With often unbearable pain, it is important to find the right approach to soothe your pain and increase your quality of life. If Fibromyalgia symptoms include mood and sleep related problems, your doctor might prescribe additional medicine for that. Please be reminded that while some medications can be helpful in reducing pain, they can often invoke other side effects. It is important to discuss this with your doctor before you proceed.

C. Therapy

Managing symptoms can include various therapies. Physical and emotional based therapies can help you strengthen your body and improve your flexibility. Since having chronic pains is often associated with stress, counseling and learning various techniques to manage your stress and deal with pain can be extremely useful.

D. Lifestyle changes

Low-intensity exercise, such as walking, makes a big difference when it comes to Fibromyalgia symptoms. It includes not only physical benefits, but also reduces stress, improves mood and helps with sleep. Another tip includes relaxing your muscles in a warm bath. Warm water helps block pain signals and relieves the symptoms. Reducing caffeine is another thing you should consider to minimize physical and psychological stress.

E. Diet...

Let's tackle this today (see below)!

The Right and Wrong Foods for Fibromyalgia

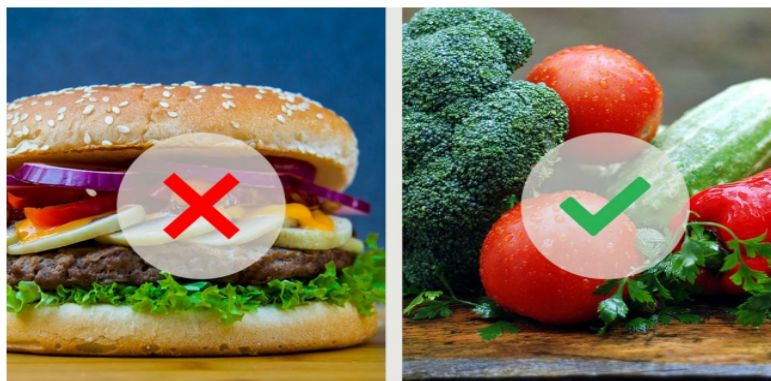
It should be noted that while there is not one specific diet for Fibromyalgia, clinical evidence shows that consuming some foods and eliminating others can help you improve symptoms.

Dietary factors can contribute to the development and exacerbation of fibromyalgia symptoms. In particular, the Western diet, characterized by high levels of refined carbohydrates, sugar, and unhealthy fats, has been linked to increased inflammation, oxidative stress, and gut dysbiosis, all of which can worsen fibromyalgia symptoms. Conversely, a whole-foods, anti-inflammatory diet rich in fruits, vegetables, healthy fats, and lean proteins has been shown to improve fibromyalgia symptoms, including pain, fatigue, and mood.

The role of nutrition in Fibromyalgia is a widely researched area of medicine. Recent evidence suggests that an imbalance of nutritional components, such as minerals and vitamins could be contributing to the development of Fibromyalgia symptoms. Specifically, muscle pain has been associated with deficiencies in amino acids, magnesium, selenium, and vitamins B and D. Lack of these nutrients can cause problems in pain inhibition and result in fatigue and other symptoms associated with Fibromyalgia. A 2018 [study](#) published on Pubmed suggests that dietary guidance is very important for patients suffering from Fibromyalgia and ensuring adequate nutrition can alleviate some pain.

One of the most recent [clinical studies](#) about the role of nutrition in Fibromyalgia management was conducted in Turkey where data about patients' nutrition and food consumption was recorded, along with their clinical symptoms. The study results suggest that a healthy diet habit consisting of ***low saturated fat, carbohydrates and higher fiber, vitamins and minerals*** may provide improvement in fibromyalgia symptoms.

So, they claim that “dietary assessment and intervention should be a part of the management of patients with fibromyalgia.” They also suggest that saturated fat may be the main factor that worsens the patients' symptoms, because saturated fat is linked to chronic low level of inflammation in the body.



Key Foods to Avoid for Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia is a chronic pain condition that can be affected and impacted by what we eat. While there is no specific diet that is proven to cure or completely alleviate fibromyalgia symptoms, avoiding the foods listed below has been shown help to manage fibromyalgia symptoms. Here are the top 10 foods to avoid for fibromyalgia:

1. Processed foods: Processed foods, which are often high in sugar, preservatives, and additives, can trigger inflammation and worsen fibromyalgia symptoms.
2. Red meat: Red meat is high in saturated fat and can contribute to inflammation, which can exacerbate fibromyalgia symptoms.
3. Dairy products: Dairy products, especially cheese and other high-fat dairy items, can trigger inflammation and worsen fibromyalgia symptoms.
4. Gluten: Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley, and rye, and some people with fibromyalgia may have gluten sensitivity. Avoiding gluten may help to alleviate some symptoms.
5. Caffeine: Caffeine can cause insomnia and anxiety, which can worsen fibromyalgia symptoms.
6. Alcohol: Alcohol can worsen fibromyalgia symptoms, especially fatigue and sleep disturbances.
7. Artificial sweeteners: Artificial sweeteners, such as aspartame and saccharin, can cause headaches and worsen fibromyalgia symptoms.
8. Fried foods: Fried foods are often high in saturated fat and can contribute to inflammation, which can exacerbate fibromyalgia symptoms.
9. Refined carbohydrates: Refined carbohydrates, such as white bread, pasta, and rice, can cause blood sugar spikes and worsen fibromyalgia symptoms.
10. Spicy foods: Spicy foods can cause inflammation and worsen fibromyalgia symptoms in some people.
11. Nightshades: Vegetables such as tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, potatoes, contain specific alkaloids that has been shown to aggravate inflammatory pain.

It is important to note that everyone's fibromyalgia symptoms are unique, and some people may not have issues with all of the foods listed above. It is best to work with a healthcare professional or registered dietitian to determine which foods may be contributing to your symptoms and to develop an individualized plan to manage your fibromyalgia.

Optimal Foods to Consume for Fibromyalgia

On the flipside to the above list of foods, there are also foods that have been shown to be helpful and beneficial to those suffering from Fibromyalgia. [Here are the top 10 best foods for fibromyalgia:](#)

1. **Fatty fish:** Fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel, and sardines are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which have anti-inflammatory properties that may help reduce pain and inflammation.
2. **Whole grains:** Whole grains such as brown rice, quinoa, and whole wheat are rich in fiber and complex carbohydrates, which can provide sustained energy and help stabilize blood sugar levels.
3. **Leafy greens:** Leafy greens such as spinach, kale, and collard greens are rich in antioxidants and other nutrients that can help reduce inflammation and boost overall health.
4. **Berries:** Berries such as blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries are rich in antioxidants and other compounds that can help reduce inflammation and improve immune function.
5. **Nuts and seeds:** Nuts and seeds such as almonds, walnuts, and flax seeds are rich in healthy fats, fiber, and protein, which can help reduce inflammation and promote satiety.
6. **Lean protein:** Lean protein sources such as chicken, turkey, and tofu can provide essential amino acids that are needed for muscle repair and overall health.
7. **Ginger:** Ginger has anti-inflammatory properties that can help reduce pain and inflammation. It can be added to tea, smoothies, or used as a spice in cooking.
8. **Turmeric:** Turmeric contains a compound called curcumin, which has anti-inflammatory properties that can help reduce pain and inflammation. It can be added to curries, smoothies, or taken as a supplement.
9. **Probiotic-rich foods:** Probiotic-rich foods such as yogurt, kefir, and kimchi can help improve gut health and boost immune function.
10. **Water:** Staying hydrated is important for overall health, and can help reduce fatigue and improve cognitive function. Aim to drink at least 8-10 glasses of water per day.

Diet can play a critical role in the management of fibromyalgia symptoms. A functional medicine approach to fibromyalgia recognizes the importance of addressing underlying imbalances, including gut dysbiosis, inflammation, and oxidative stress. By adopting a whole-foods, anti-inflammatory diet and tailoring it to individual needs, fibromyalgia patients can improve their quality of life and reduce their symptoms.

A Typical Day with Proper Diet

It can seem overwhelming, but this way of eating is actually relatively simple if you follow a template. Again, everyone is different and every case is different. But the recommendations above will go a long way toward rebalancing your immune system and neuroinflammatory pathways.

Here's an example of a meal plan for one day that excludes dairy, nightshade vegetables, and gluten:

Breakfast:

- Gluten-free oatmeal with almond milk, chia seeds, sliced banana, and chopped walnuts
- Scrambled tofu with spinach, mushrooms, and sliced avocado
- Smoothie made with almond milk, mixed berries, spinach, and protein powder

Lunch:

- Grilled chicken or fish with roasted sweet potatoes and broccoli
- Quinoa salad with mixed greens, avocado, cucumber, and grilled shrimp
- Lentil soup with a side of mixed vegetables
- Turkey or hummus wrap with mixed greens, cucumber, and avocado

Dinner:

- Grilled salmon or tofu with roasted Brussels sprouts and wild rice
- Turkey or vegetable chili with mixed vegetables
- Grilled chicken or tempeh with roasted butternut squash and green beans
- Zucchini noodles with marinara sauce and grilled chicken or shrimp

Snacks:

- Hummus with carrot and celery sticks
- Apple slices with almond butter
- Mixed nuts and seeds
- Fresh fruit with dairy-free yogurt

This meal plan includes a variety of nutrient-dense whole foods, including lean protein sources, complex carbohydrates, healthy fats, and fiber-rich fruits and vegetables. It also incorporates anti-inflammatory foods such as berries, leafy greens, nuts, and gluten-free grains like quinoa and wild rice. Again, it's important to work with a healthcare professional or registered dietitian to create a personalized meal plan that meets your individual needs and preferences.

Establish a Healing Diet & Lifestyle: How The Dempster Clinic - Center for Functional Medicine Can Help

Here are just a few of the many reasons why The Dempster Clinic - Center for Functional Medicine is the best place for you to establish a tailored Fibromyalgia diet that can heal your underlying problems.

- **Personalized approach:** Functional medicine practitioners take a personalized approach to patient care, taking into account each patient's unique symptoms, medical history, and lifestyle factors to develop an individualized treatment plan.
- **Root cause focus:** Instead of just treating symptoms, functional medicine practitioners aim to address the underlying root causes of health issues, such as fibromyalgia, which can lead to more effective and sustainable results.
- **Focus on nutrition:** Functional medicine practitioners often emphasize the importance of a healthy diet in managing fibromyalgia symptoms, and may work with patients to develop nutrition plans that support optimal health.
- **Holistic treatment options:** Functional medicine practitioners may incorporate a variety of treatment options, including lifestyle changes, supplements, and mind-body therapies, to support overall health and wellbeing.
- **Collaborative approach:** Functional medicine practitioners often work closely with patients and other healthcare providers to develop a comprehensive treatment plan that addresses all aspects of their health and wellness, including the management of fibromyalgia symptoms. Whether you are on medications or not, there is a way to collaborate your care plan focusing on you, the individual.

If you're ready to hop on a complimentary Discovery Call to find out what we can do to help you address your condition before it gets any worse, call us at 416-551-9577 – or even better, [click here to schedule your free call right now](#)

Your Next Steps

Now you've learned some critical principles about how your diet affects your disease and what you need to do to correct it.

Conventional approaches to addressing Fibromyalgia usually involve “watching and waiting” and taking medication to suppress often debilitating symptoms.

But remember, a simple change in your diet, environment, and lifestyle is the quickest, least invasive, and most effective option available today. Addressing the root cause of your symptoms in this way is non-invasive and extremely advantageous to your overall health.

Schedule a free, no-obligation phone consultation with The Dempster Clinic - Center for Functional Medicine to learn exactly what we can do to address your condition and alleviate your symptoms once and for all.

[SCHEDULE YOUR PHONE CONSULT ONLINE](#) OR CALL 416-551-9577

Put your fears to rest – there is hope. Call now to discover the ways we can work with you to help you reclaim your health and quality of life.

We look forward to helping you.

Dr. John Dempster, ND,

The Dempster Clinic - Center for Functional Medicine

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About Dr. John Dempster, ND

Dr. John Dempster, ND is board certified in both Naturopathic and Functional Medicine, and is the founder of The Dempster Clinic – Center for Functional Medicine, located in Toronto, Canada. He uses a Functional Medicine model to help diverse patients, ranging from high-performance individuals to those wanting to address or prevent chronic illness. Dr. Dempster, ND is also the founder of the Healthy Gut Institute, an in-depth online program designed to help identify and address the root cause of chronic digestive issues from the comfort of your home.

Dr. Dempster, ND writes regularly for a number of publications and lectures on a variety of health and wellness topics. In addition, he is featured frequently on national television and radio, and in newspapers and magazines.

For more information on Dr. Dempster, ND, you can visit his Instagram [@drdepster](https://www.instagram.com/drdepster) and his website thedempsterclinic.com

