



February 2010

# Derby Fibromyalgia Support Group

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**THE COMMITTEE  
WISHES  
EVERYONE**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

**and**

**VALENTINE DAY**

# Message From The Chairperson

*HI Folks.*

*I know this is an unusual late start this year (2010), but hopefully we will get back on track again soon. We've had a bit of a cold start to the year, not to mention an unexpected white one. Hope its not been making any of you too poorly!! Got some plans to go into place for a fundraising year for us, so watch this space for the forthcoming news!! If you know of any fun days happening in your area so we could do a stall to raise awareness and some fundraising, just let us know to we can make some arrangements, you could always come along and help.*

*Even though I am chairperson I also have fibro and other health problems, and last year was no exception, I'm hoping this year is better so I can carry on the good work I started, with your support of course. So do join us for a cuppa and a chat. That's where we'll start. ☺☺*

*Jackie x*

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Thursday 4 February 2010

## **AttendanceA - petition response**

### **We received a petition asking:**

“We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to recognise the vital support that Attendance Allowance (AA) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) provide to disabled people, and to ensure that these benefits are secured and are not removed as part of any future reform of the social care system in England.”

### **Read the Government's response**

The Government understands that disability benefits provide an important means of financial support for severely disabled people who have extra costs as a result of their disabilities.

We also know that the care and support system that we have at the moment is not sustainable.

By 2026, population estimates show that there will be double the number of people aged over 85 that there are now, and the number of people over 100 will have quadrupled. In 20 years' time, we expect over 1.7 million more adults to have a need for care and support. We need to reform the care and support system radically to meet these future pressures.

In a reformed social care and support system, which offers more support to older and disabled people, we are looking to see if bringing together the new care and support system and some disability benefits into a single system may be a better way of providing support. However, we will only do this if we can better support the needs of older and disabled people, and we have ruled out bringing Disability Living Allowance for those under the age of 65 into the National Care Service.

Whatever the outcome of the consultation, we want to ensure that people receiving any of the relevant benefits at the time of reform will continue to receive the same level of cash support under our new and better care and support system.

If consultation shows that integrating some disability benefits into a simplified system is the right approach, we would want to ensure that the future care and support system retains and builds on the main advantages of the current disability benefits system. We know that disability benefits are popular because they provide a universal entitlement which does not depend on where a person lives, they provide a cash budget which can be spent on the services someone wants, and people often use them in ways that help them to stay independent and well for longer.

These three aspects – a universal system that is consistent across the country, flexible methods of payment through personal budgets and investment in prevention – will all be important components of the new system.

From: 10 Downing Street [mailto:[number10@petitions.pm.gov.uk](mailto:number10@petitions.pm.gov.uk)]

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# **What is Fibromyalgia?**

Fibromyalgia is a condition whereby your body's normal receptors in the central nervous system transform non-painful signals into painful ones; thus leaving the sufferer feeling localised pain where there shouldn't be any.

The condition is similar to M.E (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) in some of its symptoms but where it differs is in how it is diagnosed. Fibromyalgia is very difficult to diagnose whereas M.E (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) has some tell-tale signs.

## **How Do I Know if I Have Fibromyalgia?**

Unfortunately for sufferers of Fibromyalgia if you haven't already had a diagnosis from your doctor then you may have quite a wait before a diagnosis is settled upon. Many individuals who suffer from the condition do so under something of a cloud; that cloud is not only a lack of diagnosis but also the knowledge that if Fibromyalgia is diagnosed then it has no cure.

Many sufferers of Fibromyalgia have to wait some time for a diagnosis to be made and it can be made only after all other conditions including M.E (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) have been ruled out. Indeed so difficult is it to diagnose that it can take a number of years before your doctor – after consulting with specialists and consultants – will settle on a final diagnosis.

## **The Symptoms of Fibromyalgia**

Fibromyalgia has a number of symptoms which are common among many sufferers; having said this many sufferers also experience a completely different set of symptoms depending on the severity of their condition. Here, however, we list the most common symptoms to be had by Fibromyalgia sufferers:

- Fatigue
- Muscle stiffness
- Headaches
- Insomnia
- Poor short term memory
- Inability to concentrate
- Tinnitus

As mentioned previously the aforementioned list is just a selection of the variety of symptoms that are experienced by the many Fibromyalgia sufferers in the United Kingdom alone. These symptoms are also accompanied by a wider variety of symptoms that are specific to each individual case and any doctor will tell you that no two Fibromyalgia sufferers experience exactly the same set of symptoms.

## **What Can I Do if I Have Fibromyalgia?**

Unfortunately the answer to this question is not the most positive; the answer is simply there is not much you can do as Fibromyalgia has no cure. Your doctor however can help treat certain aspects of the condition such as the pain factor and the inability to sleep. However he or she cannot provide you with an all-in-one cure as Fibromyalgia and M.E (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) simply do not have one.

The severity of your condition depends on what kind of lifestyle you lead. Some sufferers only have occasional 'flare-ups' and manage to continue with their lives in much the same way as they did before the condition arose; however there are others at the other end of the spectrum who find that the Fibromyalgia is so chronic that they are unable to function in the same way.

Chronic sufferers of the condition experience a complete change in their lifestyle and do find that they have to sacrifice certain activities – in particular those which involve a lot of physical movement. They may also experience problems with everyday tasks that they would have normally taken for granted.

## **Making Changes to My Lifestyle**

Your doctor will give you advice and support and will be able to put you in touch with support groups where you can meet with other Fibromyalgia sufferers – these groups are invaluable as you can learn from other people's experiences and no longer have to feel as though you are suffering alone.

# Meeting Dates 2010

## Thursday

*11<sup>th</sup> March  
8<sup>th</sup> April  
13<sup>th</sup> May  
10<sup>th</sup> June  
8<sup>th</sup> July  
9<sup>th</sup> September  
14<sup>th</sup> October  
11<sup>th</sup> November  
9<sup>th</sup> December*

*10.15am – 12.30pm*

## Saturday

*20<sup>th</sup> February  
27<sup>th</sup> March  
24<sup>th</sup> April  
22<sup>nd</sup> May  
26<sup>th</sup> June  
24<sup>th</sup> July  
25<sup>th</sup> September  
23<sup>rd</sup> October  
27<sup>th</sup> November  
18<sup>th</sup> December*

*2.00pm – 4.00pm*

**THERE IS NO MEETINGS IN AUGUST**

Admission

Members £2.50

Non – Members £3.50

Membership £5.00 Per Annum

Free Car Park at Back of Church

Off Melbourne Street

# Forthcoming Church Events

<b>SPEAKERS</b>			<b>Regular Events</b>	
<b>February</b>			<b>Open Circle</b> Every 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday Of Each Month  <b>7.30pm</b>  No Admission After 7.35pm	<b>Healing Services</b>  Thursdays  <b>2.00pm – 4.00pm</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>SPEAKER</b>		
Sun 14 <sup>th</sup>	6.15pm	Emily Baker		
Mon 15 <sup>th</sup>	2.30pm	John & Olga Carrington		
Sun 21 <sup>st</sup>	6.15pm	Lawrence Chapman		
Mon 22 <sup>nd</sup>	2.30pm	Margaret Brown		
Sun 28 <sup>th</sup>	6.15pm	Richard Press		
<b>March</b>				
Mon 1 <sup>st</sup>	2.30pm	Pam Franklin		
Sun 7 <sup>th</sup>	6.15pm	Graham Lymer		
Mon 8 <sup>th</sup>	2.30pm	June Berk		
Sun 14 <sup>th</sup>	6.15pm	Margaret Allen		
Mon 15 <sup>th</sup>	2.30pm	Anne Monks		

## SPECIAL EVENTS

# Supper With Spirit

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March

Mini Fish and Chips

£10 Donation

Book in advance



For More  
Information

18 Charnwood Street, Derby.  
DE1 2GU.

Tel: **01332 386 204.**

[www.snu-emdc.org.uk/charnwood](http://www.snu-emdc.org.uk/charnwood)

# Vitamins and Diet Supplements For Fibromyalgia Sufferers

An important aspect of anyone's health and well being is a steady and regular intake of vitamins that helps the body to fight against illness and also helps keep the body's natural functions in good working order.

This is especially important in the case of someone suffering from Fibromyalgia or M.E (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) as the body can sometimes feel very run down even when the mind of the sufferer is fighting fit.

## **Regular Vitamins**

One aspect of vitamin intake that is very important is the right diet. Dietary considerations for anyone who is ill are something that should be taken seriously and no more so when that individual has difficulty with muscular function and joint pain.

Important sources of vitamins in an everyday diet are:

- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Fish
- Meat

Where possible you should try and eat as much of the above as you can as part of your regular daily food intake without going over the top. Certain foods such as meat and vegetables in too large a quantity can cause indigestion and other digestive problems

As part of your vitamin intake you should be looking to take onboard equal amounts of Vitamin A, B and C - studies have shown that sufferers of Fibromyalgia and M.E (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) often show a need to increase their vitamin intake and should do so either in the form of the aforementioned food stuffs or as vitamin supplements taken orally.

## **Diet**

Vitamins and minerals are important to help the body fight against infection and also to help the muscles and joints in their own fight against the onslaught of Fibromyalgia. However because both Fibromyalgia and M.E (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) can be debilitating and often leave the sufferer in a position where they have to spend a lot of their time without exercise a balanced diet is necessary to ensure that their weight does not spiral out of control. Many sufferers find that their weight will increase as their mobility becomes less and less.

Creating a diet plan - with the aid of your doctor or dietician at your doctor's bequest - is an ideal way to ensure that not only do you eat healthy but you eat the foods which are going to give the body all the natural vitamins and minerals it needs.

## **Royal Jelly**

A regular intake of Royal Jelly is a good way to help your immune system if you are a sufferer of Fibromyalgia or M.E (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis). Royal Jelly is a mixture of minerals, vitamins, nectar and natural sugars and has been linked to improvements in mental awareness as well as a reduction in skin problems such as eczema and acne (two skin problems which are synonymous with both Fibromyalgia and M.E sufferers).

As always, before embarking on any course of vitamins or supplements one should contact one's doctor and make sure that there will not be any complications such as allergies.

Your doctor should ideally be able to sit down with you and help you work out a diet plan that will help you get the best from the vitamins and minerals contained in the foodstuffs as well as give you some indication as to how much exercise you can participate in to help keep your joints and muscles in working order.

# What Causes Fibromyalgia Syndrome?

Symptoms of fibromyalgia syndrome (see 'What is Fibromyalgia?') include fatigue, with musculoskeletal pain (described as aching or throbbing) and tenderness throughout the body. Other symptoms can include disturbed sleep, stiffness, especially in the morning, migraines, depression, anxiety, stress, acid reflux and irritable bowel syndrome.

Fibromyalgia syndrome can be described as primary or secondary (as a result of another condition), and the causes of primary fibromyalgia syndrome (the most common form) are not clear. There are, however, many theories.

## **Triggers of Fibromyalgia**

There appear to be a number of sets of circumstances that can trigger fibromyalgia syndrome – these are not the underlying cause of the disease, but set off the appearance of the symptoms.

A virus or other infectious agent, which may damage nerves, may trigger fibromyalgia syndrome and causes pain signals to be sent in error. Viruses that may be involved include Lyme's disease, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV, which causes AIDS), Coxsackie B virus and parvovirus B19. Researchers have seen persistent levels of enteroviruses in the muscle of some people with fibromyalgia syndrome, which are not there in healthy volunteers. Injury and emotional stress both appear to be triggers for fibromyalgia syndrome. In some studies, 25-50% of people with fibromyalgia syndrome report an injury before development of the symptoms. Some physicians suspect exposure to certain drugs and chemicals.

Hormonal changes, for example the menopause, especially if it is early, or a hysterectomy, may also trigger the disorder.

Another disease such as rheumatoid arthritis may trigger fibromyalgia syndrome.

## **Genetics**

Fibromyalgia syndrome seems to run in families – a study of twins confirmed that fibromyalgia syndrome appears to have a genetic background.

## **Brain Changes and Dysfunction**

A number of people with fibromyalgia syndrome show changes in the structure of their brains, which seem to correlate with problems with long- and short-term memory.

A study of the hippocampus (a part of the brain that controls cognitive functions, sleep and pain) showed changes in its function in people with fibromyalgia syndrome.

## **Cytokines**

Some scientists believe that many of the symptoms of fibromyalgia syndrome, especially those associated with sleep disturbance, may be caused by abnormal levels of cytokines. These are chemicals that carry signals between the cells of the immune system.

## **Neurotransmitters**

In fibromyalgia syndrome, levels of different neurotransmitters (chemicals that carry messages between nerve cells) can be too high or too low. These include serotonin (involved in sleep, pain, temperature, appetite, sex drive and mood); norepinephrine (involved in memory and alertness); dopamine (involved in focus and motivation); substance P (help transmit pain messages); and endorphins (produced as a natural 'antidote' in response to pain and tiredness).

People with fibromyalgia syndrome may have increased levels of substance P and reduced levels of endorphins, which may explain the increased perception of pain. They also seem to have lower levels of serotonin, which could explain the symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Studies show that in fibromyalgia syndrome, there may be changes in the genes for some neurotransmitters, and these changes are also seen in chronic fatigue syndrome, irritable bowel syndrome and depression.

## **Vitamin D Deficiency**

In studies of people with fibromyalgia syndrome, 83-93% had a vitamin D deficiency – however, many people have a vitamin D deficiency and don't have fibromyalgia syndrome, so it is unlikely to be a simple link.

## **Obesity**

In a US study, around half of the people with fibromyalgia syndrome were obese, and a further 20% were overweight – however, it is not clear whether obesity is a cause, or is as a result of the disorder.

# Try These

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## Baked cod with a herby crust

### Ingredients

- 2 x 180g/6oz pieces of cod loin
- 2 tbsp fresh white breadcrumbs
- 2 tbsp mixed fresh herbs - chervil, chives, parsley, coriander - chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed finely
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- salt and pepper

### Method

1. Heat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6.
2. Mix together the herbs, garlic and oil. Stir in the breadcrumbs and season well.
3. Spread this mixture over the fish.
4. Put the fish on a baking sheet and bake in the oven for 10-15 minutes until the flesh becomes opaque and flakes easily.

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## Passion fruit meringues

### Ingredients

4 shop-bought meringues

### For the filling and garnish

- 4 passion fruits
- 100ml/3½fl oz well-chilled heavy cream
- 1½ tsp sugar
- 1 small pomegranate (optional)

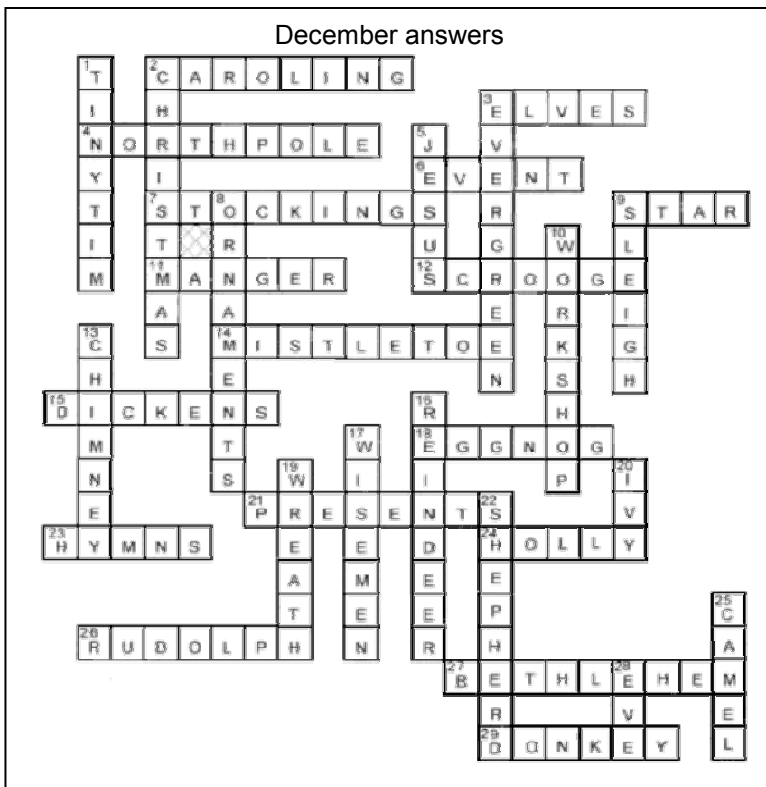
### Method

1. For the filling, cut three passion fruits in half and scoop out the pulp (including the seeds and juice) into a sieve set over a bowl.
2. Force the pulp through the sieve, pressing hard on the seeds, and discard the seeds.
3. In a bowl, beat the cream until it holds soft peaks and fold in the passion fruit juice and sugar until just combined.
4. To make the garnish, cut the remaining passion fruit in half and scoop out the seeds, reserving them.
5. Cut the pomegranate in half then, bending back the rinds, dislodge some seeds from the membranes.
6. Reserve these and reserve some juice.
7. Arrange a meringue on each of two plates.
8. Top the meringues with whipped cream and garnish with some reserved passion fruit and pomegranate seeds.
9. Top each pudding with one more meringue.
10. These can be made two hours ahead and chilled, loosely covered. Bring them to room temperature before serving.
11. Once ready to eat, garnish each plate with some more passion fruit, some pomegranate seeds and some reserved juice. Serve.

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# Puzzles and Jokes



## A Thoughtful Valentine's Day Gift

Jim asked his friend, Tony, whether he had bought his wife anything for Valentine's Day.

'Yes,' came the answer from Tony who was a bit of a chauvinist, 'I've bought her a belt and a bag.'

'That was very kind of you,' Jim added, 'I hope she appreciated the thought.'

Tony smiled as he replied, 'So do I, and hopefully the vacuum cleaner will work better now.'

## My One And Only

Roger, who was 19 years old, was buying an expensive bracelet, to surprise his girlfriend on Valentine's Day, at a very smart jeweller's shop in Hatton Garden, London.

The jeweller inquired, 'Would you like your girlfriend's name engraved on it?'

Roger thought for a moment, grinned, then answered, 'No, instead engrave "To my one and only love".'

The jeweller smiled and said, 'Yes, sir; how very romantic of you.'

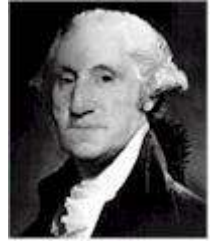
Roger retorted with a glint in his eye, 'Not exactly romantic, but very practical. This way, if we break up, I can use it again.'

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	2							
9	1	6			7			2
8		9	1					
2			5		6			7
					9	8		5
4			2			7	1	6
							2	
				6		5		4

# DID YOU KNOW

## History of the calendar

In September 1752 the Julian calendar was replaced with the Gregorian calendar in Great Britain and its American colonies. The Julian calendar was 11 days behind the Gregorian calendar, so 14 September got to follow 2 September on the day of the change. The result was that between 3 and 13 September, absolutely nothing happened! The calendar switch also influenced the way George Washington's birthday is celebrated. He was born on 11 February 1731, but the anniversary of his birth is on 22 February because of the 11 days eliminated from the calendar switch. At the same time, New Year's Day was changed from 25 March to 1 January, thus according to the new calendar, Washington was born in 1732. George Washington, born 11 February 1731 and 22 February 1732



**The first Roman Calendar** (introduced in 535BC) had 10 months, with 304 days in a year that began in March. January and February were added only later. In 46BC, Julius Caesar created "The Year of Confusion" by adding 80 days to the year making it 445 days long to bring the calendar back in step with the seasons. The solar year - with the value of 365 days and 6 hours - was made the basis of the calendar. To take care of the 6 hours, every 4th year was made a 366-day year. It was then that Caesar decreed that the year begins with the 1st of January. In 325AD Constantine the Great, the first Christian Roman emperor, introduced Sunday as a holy day in a new 7-day week. He also introduced movable (Easter) and immovable feasts (Christmas).

In 1545 the Council of Trent authorised Pope Paul III to **reform the calendar** once more. Advised by astronomer Father Christopher Clavius and physician Aloysius Lilius, Pope Gregory XIII ordered that Thursday, 4 October 1582 was to be the last day of the Julian calendar. The next day was Friday, 15 October. For long-term accuracy, every 4th year was made a leap year unless it is a century year like 1700 or 1800. Century years can be leap years only when they are divisible by 400 (e.g. 1600). This rule eliminates three leap years in four centuries, making the calendar sufficiently correct for all ordinary purposes.

Protestant rulers ignored the new calendar that the Pope ordered. It was not until 1698 that Germany and the Netherlands changed to the Gregorian calendar. As mentioned, Britain made the change only in 1752. Russia adopted the new calendar in 1918, China in 1949.

In spite of the leap year, the Gregorian year is about 26 seconds longer than the earth's orbital period. Thus the beginning of the third millennium should have been celebrated at 9:01pm on 31 December 1999. But considering that the Gregorian calendar starts with Year 1, and not Year 0, adding 2000 years means that the third millennium started at 21h00:34s on 31 December 2000. However, because Dionysius Exiguus - the 6th Century monk whose task it was to pivot the calendar around the birth of Jesus Christ - miscalculated the founding of Rome by about 4 years (and left out the year 0), the true third millennium actually started on 31 December 1995.

### The calendars

The first day of the year in the Gregorian calendar is 1 January.

The first month in the Hindu calendar is Chait'r (March/April in the Gregorian calendar).

The Chinese New Year occurs at the second new moon after the beginning of the Northern Hemisphere winter, thus between 20 January and 20 February.

The Jewish calendar begun 3760 years before the beginning of the Christian era. The Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, is celebrated during September or October of the Gregorian calendar.

The 24-hour division of the day was introduced in the 4th Century BC by the Sumero-Babylonians. In 1905 Einstein showed in his theory of relativity that time is effected by motion so that the faster one goes the slower time does. In 1972, Atomic time became the world's official time standard, as Co-ordinated Universal Time (UTC)

In the 6th Century, the Roman monk and astronomer named Dionysius Exiguus (Dionysius the Little) reformed the calendar to pivot around the birth of Christ. He dated the Nativity 753 years from the founding of Rome, calculated to the date King Herod died. But Dionysius miscalculated, because Herod died only 749 years after the founding of Rome, thus 4BC. Dionysius also left out the Year 0. He used the Julian calendar.

