



March 2010

# Derby Fibromyalgia Support Group

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# Message from The Chairperson

*HI Fibro friends.*

*How are you all coping with the cold weather??*

*Well we've got a calendar of things to look forward to this year, we've got some interesting guest speakers, and an entertaining 'night out' to look to forward to in November. Laughing is the best remedy and hopefully we can get some of that. 😊😊*

*We've got a regular coffee morning going off at the Derby Garden centre, Little Eaton once a month, hope you can join us.*

*Jackie x*

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# 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

*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  
£2.50

Free Car Park at Back of Church  
Off Melbourne Street

# Forthcoming Church Events

<b>SPEAKERS</b>			<b>Regular Events</b>	
<b>March</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	Margaret Allen		
Mon 15 <sup>th</sup>	2.30pm	Anne Monks		
Sun 21 <sup>st</sup>	6.15pm	Joy and Glen Frost		
Mon 22 <sup>nd</sup>	2.30pm	Ted Lawrence		
Sun 28 <sup>th</sup>	6.15pm	Sarah McGarry		
Mon 29 <sup>th</sup>	2.30pm	Lucy Watts		
<b>April</b>				
Sun 4 <sup>th</sup>	6.15pm	John Powell		
Mon 5 <sup>th</sup>	2.30pm	Closed		
Sun 11 <sup>th</sup>	6.15pm	Richard Press		
Mon 12 <sup>th</sup>	2.30pm	Angela ferrel		

## SPECIAL EVENTS

# Workshop

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> April

10.00am – 4.00pm

Darren

Brittain

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)

# Four Treatments for Fibromyalgia

By Mehmet Oz, MD

Photo: Ben Goldstein/Studio D



Dr. Oz will see you now! In his first O column, he analyzes the different treatments for fibromyalgia.

**Defining Fibromyalgia:** Though classified as a disorder of the musculoskeletal system, the condition is now seen as a central nervous system problem. Symptoms include increased sensitivity to pain, achy and stiff joints, fatigue, and specific tender points on the back, chest, arms, and legs. Migraines, sleep disorders, and irritable bowel syndrome are also common complaints. Up to 3 percent of the population may suffer from fibromyalgia, but with no clear cause, the condition is difficult to diagnose.

**Western Medicine Approach:** A formal diagnosis for fibromyalgia didn't exist until 1990, but now there are three FDA-approved meds to combat the pain. Still, says Nancy Klimas, MD, director of the Allergy and Immunology Clinic at the University of Miami, "there is much more to treatment than a pill." Strategies are needed to improve sleep, stretch and restore symmetry to muscles that have been shortened by spasm, and raise overall conditioning through exercise.

**Energy-Based Approach:** Practitioners believe the root of fibromyalgia is a disturbance in nerves that blocks energy. The disturbance, says Devi S. Nambudripad, MD, PhD, and a licensed acupuncturist, is caused by sensitivities to substances ranging from pollen to vaccines to chemical agents in fabrics. Anxiety and depression may also play a part. Practitioners use acupuncture to release energy and allergy testing to identify problem substances.

**Psychological Approach:** "The pain of fibromyalgia is not caused by depression," says Leonard Jason, PhD, professor of psychology at DePaul University, "but depression can deepen a patient's experience of pain." Mental health professionals may play a complementary role in treatment, but it's a vital one. Cognitive behavioral therapy can relieve depression and help patients identify sources of stress that magnify their symptoms.

**Nutrition-Based Approach:** Fibromyalgia is a systemwide breakdown, says Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, medical director of the nationwide Fibromyalgia & Fatigue Centers. After suffering from the disease in the 1970s, he developed his own protocol; in studies, patients improved by as much as 91 percent. He recommends supplements to help sufferers sleep, balance hormones, boost immunity, and improve nutrition. He also prescribes regular exercise. (Try Dr. Oz's 20-minute workout plan)

**My Recommendation:** Because Western medicine was slow to accept fibromyalgia, it is behind in its work; this is an area where patients will want to take a serious look at alternative approaches. Energy-based medicine could offer some important advances in treatment over the next decade, but since it has yet to be tested by independent research, I think it's premature to base your therapy solely on this approach. I'm more impressed by Teitelbaum's supplement regimen, and not only because he has tested his theories: I've put patients on this program with very good results. I would add counseling, as it should always be a part of fibromyalgia treatment. If after a couple of months you don't see improvement, talk to your doctor about drug therapy.

**Stay Healthy: Heart smarts from Dr. Oz and Dr. Roizen**

## Related Resources

Start the Dr. Oz workout

9 numbers you need to know to stay healthy

From the September 2009 issue of *O, The Oprah Magazine*

# Two Minute DLA physical health test

This simple test is intended to help you to decide whether it may be worth filling out a disability living allowance claim pack if you have a physical health condition, but please bear in mind that it's a test we invented ourselves because the statutory criteria for DLA are so confusing. So, it is in no way a legal test of eligibility, just a way of helping you to decide whether to put in a claim

1. Look through this list of some (but not all) of the everyday activities that are relevant to DLA:

- Walking outdoors
- Walking outdoors alone in unfamiliar places
- Preparing a cooked main meal for yourself
- Moving about indoors
- Taking medication
- Eating and drinking
- Staying safe if you're alone
- Communicating with other people
- Getting out of bed in the morning
- Getting into bed at night
- Sleeping
- Using the toilet
- Washing, having a bath or a shower
- Looking after your appearance
- Getting dressed and undressed
- Social and leisure activities

(Shopping and housework are not generally counted as everyday activities that are relevant to DLA, but see [More about the way your illness or disabilities affect you](#))

2. Choose one of the activities above that you have some problems with. For example:

- you may have problems using the toilet because you have irritable bowel syndrome which causes abdominal pain and urgent diarrhoea, so you sometimes don't make it in time;
- you might have problems going outdoors alone in unfamiliar places because a visual impairment makes it difficult for you to see obstructions or cross roads safely;
- you may not be able to prepare a cooked main meal for yourself because arthritis in your hands means you can't peel or chop vegetables.

With your chosen activity in mind, answer the True or False questions below. If your condition varies, so that the answer is sometimes true and sometimes false, then choose whichever applies for the majority of the time

- **I can do it, but it hurts.** True or False?
- **I can do it, but only slowly.** True or False?
- **I can do it, but only using a special technique of my own.** True or False?
- **I can do it, but I need someone with me just in case things go wrong.** True or False?
- **It's not safe for me to do it.** True or False?
- **I can't do it at all.** True or False?

3. If you haven't answered True to any of the questions, try the test again with another activity from the list and so on, until you've found a statement that is true or decided that there aren't any

4. If the answer is True to any of the questions in relation to any of the activities listed then you may be entitled to DLA, because they are all reasons why you might 'reasonably require' help or supervision, even if you don't get it or want it. Whether you are actually eligible for DLA, and at what rate, will depend on factors such as how many activities you have problems with and which ones they are. Find out more about how we can help if you decide to complete a disability living allowance claim form.

5.

6. If the answer wasn't true to any of the questions it doesn't mean you are definitely not eligible for DLA, you should try to get advice from one of the agencies listed on the [Help with benefits page](#)

## **Help with benefits**

For help with benefits, our members have access to a very wide range of downloadable guides to such things as completing a DLA claim pack or appealing against a decision that you are capable of work

However, we can't offer advice to individuals about a specific benefits problem under any circumstances. To give accurate and reliable advice about a specific benefits problem you need to know a great deal about your income, savings, health, household arrangements and more. To give advice without all this information would risk seriously misinforming you

If you need specific benefits advice, you can download a **FREE**, 12 page guide to getting help with your benefits at [www.benefitsandwork.co.uk/images/image/samples/getting\\_help.pdf](http://www.benefitsandwork.co.uk/images/image/samples/getting_help.pdf)

Alternatively, try the agencies below.

### **Community Legal Advice helpline 0845 345 4 345**

Free advice on a range of subjects, including welfare benefits, if you are eligible for Legal Help. More details from [www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk](http://www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk)

### **Disability Information Advice Lines**

Visit the DIAL UK website at [www.dialuk.info](http://www.dialuk.info) to find out if you have a DIAL in your area – there are around 120 in the UK. DIALs are staffed by disabled people and offer free telephone advice on benefits for disabled people, people with long-term health conditions and carers

### **Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CAB)**

To find your local bureau look under Citizens Advice Bureau in your phone book. You can also find details of your nearest bureaux, including ones with a welfare benefits specialist, at: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

### **Law Centres**

Contact details of your nearest Law Centre, where you may be able to get free advice and representation at appeals, are available from the Law Centres Federation website at [www.lawcentres.org.uk](http://www.lawcentres.org.uk)

### **Shelter**

Shelter offers help with benefits, but generally only in relation to housing or if your home is at risk because of your benefits problems. For help call the Shelter helpline on 0808 800 4444 or visit their website at [www.shelter.org.uk](http://www.shelter.org.uk) for details of your nearest Shelter Housing Aid Centre.

# **Tips For Preventing Fibromyalgia Pain**

By [www.ChronicPainConnection.com](http://www.ChronicPainConnection.com)

**By Karen Lee Richards**

While there is no foolproof way to prevent Fibromyalgia pain, there are things you can do to educate yourself that may help you avoid painful situations.

## **Understanding the Pain Cycle:**

With Fibromyalgia, what should be a mild, localized short term pain becomes a stronger, widespread, long term pain. Aches and pains that should be mild, like stubbing a toe, instead can be intense and last for days in a Fibromyalgia patient.

## **The Uncertainty of it All:**

Usually we don't know what triggers our pain cycles – why we hurt more some days than others. Often it's tiny, unnoticeable things. Our central nervous systems become so hypersensitive that we react to things like changes in barometric pressure brought on by weather fronts. I'm not suggesting you spend a lot of time trying to figure out what causes every pain flare. Focusing that much attention on your pain will only serve to make it hurt worse. But being aware of how the pain cycle works can help us make changes in what we do or the way we do it so we can try to reduce our pain levels.

## **Heading Pain Off at the Pass:**

First and foremost, Fibromyalgia patients need to understand that it does not help them to try to tough it out when it comes to pain. Once the pain cycle has begun, it will only get worse. That is why it's important for Fibromyalgia patients to take their medications on a regular schedule to help prevent the pain cycle from getting foothold.

Other prevention techniques stem from common sense things. If you tend to overdo when you're having a good day, force yourself to scale back or do less strenuous activities so you don't spend the next week paying for one day's enthusiasm. Just try to be more aware of what you do and how you do it. You might try keeping a pain journal for a month to see if you can pinpoint things that may be increasing your pain levels.

# Are you missing out on cash while off sick?

**4 March 2010**

*We asked our resident barrister, Holiday Whitehead, to tell us what things people on long-term sick leave should be thinking about in relation to their employment and what rights their employer may not be telling them about.*

If you are currently on long term sick leave and feeling unsure of your position, hiding away and keeping your head down in the hope that you will be forgotten is not, in my opinion, advisable.

In fact, doing this makes it much more likely that you will hear absolutely nothing from work until you suddenly get a letter or phone call telling you that you have to attend a medical or an interview to discuss your sick leave and your future employment. This unexpected contact, after months of not hearing from your employer at all, can feel intimidating and be very stressful.

You may even receive a letter telling you that you are being considered for redundancy, due to the need to restructure the organisation or because of the economic downturn or something similar

A much better strategy than laying low is to gather all the information you need to ensure you get the financial and other support you are entitled to and then to keep your employer regularly informed about your circumstances.

## **Contract, policies and procedures**

If you don't have a copy of your contract and an up to date set of all of your workplace policies and procedures, then contact your employer or your human resources department and ask for copies to be sent to you.

When you get these, check the sickness policy to identify how employees on long-term sick leave should be treated and whether that is happening for you.

For example, medical or occupational health examinations are a common area of anxiety for employees. By having access to all of your terms, conditions, policies and procedures, you will know when you are likely to be asked to attend a medical or be visited at home for that purpose.

In addition, if you are covered by your employer's health care insurance then ask for copies of the insurance terms and conditions to ensure you are getting your full entitlement.

Check your sick pay provisions and identify whether they are contractual or statutory. Also check what happens when your contractual sick pay runs out.

## **Annual leave**

You may not have been told that your annual leave still accrues while you are on sick leave, but it's vital that you are aware of this.

If you are unable to take that leave, a recent change in the law now allows you to carry your accrued entitlement over to the following year. You are then allowed to use that accrued leave on your return to work, or have it all paid in lieu if your employment ends before you return to work.

Alternatively, if you have accrued annual leave you may be able to take that paid leave while you are off sick, even if your sick pay entitlement has expired. This would have to be arranged with your employer and quite possibly your GP, but it may be a way of getting some extra income.

You may also want to consider using any accrued leave as a bridge between your long-term sick leave and your return to work.

## **Don't lose out**

Whatever your situation, ensure you have all of the information and documents you need. Chasing your employer for this information may feel like a very difficult thing for you to do while you are off sick,. But if you don't, you may be missing out on valuable entitlements that you can't afford to lose out on.

## **Need help?**

If you're currently in employment and facing difficulties of any kind, then you may be interested in a new initiative from Holiday Whitehead being promoted solely via Benefits and Work.

Most of Holiday's work is with voluntary sector employers. However, Holiday is offering a pilot service at a very considerably reduced rate for employees. If you're having problems at work such as:

Long-term sick leave issues

Disability discrimination

Facing redundancy

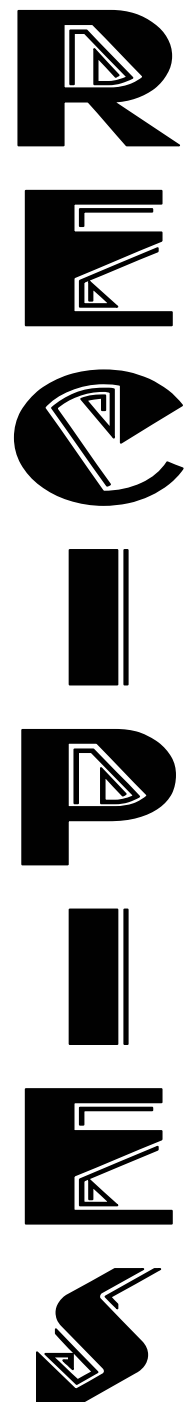
Being pressured into resigning

Changes to your terms and conditions

Then Holiday may be able to help. More details from Holiday's website:

<http://www.holidaywhitehead.co.uk/services/employees.htm>

# Try These



## Ingredients

Amounts depend on how much you want to make!

- Large saucepan
- Potatoes
- Leeks
- Bacon bits
- Carrots
- Large white onion
- Two chicken oxos
- Boiling water
- Butter/Cooking oil
- Salt
- Pepper
- Single cream

## Method

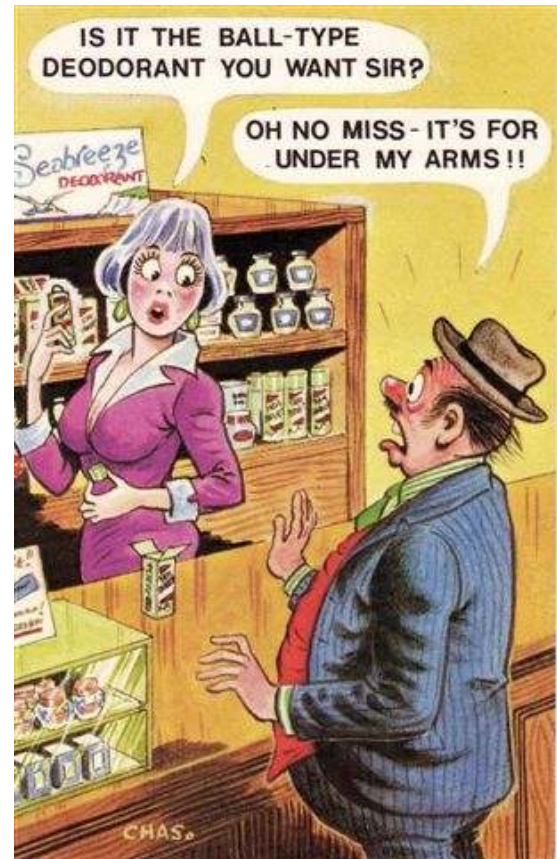
1. Peel potatoes and carrots, slice quite thinly. Slice the leek and onion.
2. Fry the bacon bits with the leek and onion in the butter/cooking oil for about 5-10 mins. Sprinkle in chicken oxos.
3. Add potatoes and carrots.
4. Pour in boiling water - enough to cover all the ingredients in the pan. Add salt and pepper to taste.
5. Simmer for about 40 mins to an hour or until the potatoes and carrots have become soft.
6. Serve...
7. Can add single cream to taste.
8. Can also blend but it wont look very nice!

**Chef Jodie Brougham**

# Puzzles and Jokes

February answers

7	3	4	6	1	2	9	5	8
5	2	8	4	9	3	6	7	1
9	1	6	8	5	7	4	3	2
8	5	9	1	7	4	2	6	3
2	4	3	5	8	6	1	9	7
1	6	7	3	2	9	8	4	5
4	9	5	2	3	8	7	1	6
6	8	1	7	4	5	3	2	9
3	7	2	9	6	1	5	8	4



7		1				3		
4		6	3	8				7
		7	5					
	9		4			7		6
			6	1				
								1
2		5			3			
	8			5		9	4	

