

# TCM Treatment and Prevention of Fibromyalgia

Dr. Baisong Zhong Ph.D, L.Ac, MD(China)



WWW: [Easternbalancetcm.com](http://Easternbalancetcm.com)

E-mail: [Painandacupuncture@yahoo.com](mailto:Painandacupuncture@yahoo.com)

## 1. What is fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia (fi-bro-my-AL-ja) syndrome (FMS) produces chronic body-wide pain, which migrates and can be felt from head to toe. Other symptoms include persistent fatigue, headaches, cognitive or memory impairment, morning stiffness and non-restorative sleep. The pain can migrate from day to day. Recent scientific research studies have shown central nervous system involvement in FMS.

(<http://www.nfra.net/>)

## 2. How is incident of the illness

Over 6 million Americans, 90% of them women in the prime of their life, suffer from FMS and sometimes struggle for years before being correctly diagnosed.

Symptoms usually appear between 20-55 years of age, but children are also diagnosed with fibromyalgia syndrome.

Pain and severe fatigue may keep FMS sufferers from their chosen profession and unable to perform common daily tasks.

Fibromyalgia pain continues throughout a person's lifetime.

### 3. What is the Cause of the disease

- Fibromyalgia is considered to be a syndrome—a set of symptoms that occur together but do not have a known cause. There are theories as to what may cause it, but there is not enough evidence to support any single theory. People—especially women—who have a family member with fibromyalgia are more likely to develop it themselves. It has been recognized as a medical disorder only since the 1980s.
- Some theories suggest that fibromyalgia may be linked to:
  - Oversensitive nerve cells in the spinal cord and brain. Oversensitivity may be due to changes in chemicals in the brain or spinal cord that regulate pain. As a result, the person senses pain more easily, and widespread muscle pain occurs.
  - An imbalance in the brain chemicals that control mood, which results in a lowered tolerance for pain and may also cause an unrestful sleep cycle and fatigue. Once this occurs, a person becomes less physically active, and the muscles and tissues become more sensitive and painful and more easily irritated.
  - An imbalance of hormones such as cortisol and growth hormone. Their release is controlled by the pituitary gland and the hypothalamus. Imbalances of these hormones can result in fatigue, mood changes, concentration and memory difficulties, a lowered tolerance for pain, and other symptoms.
  - A disturbance in the deep phase of sleep. Some chemicals, such as growth hormone, are secreted by the body during this phase of sleep. If sleep is disrupted, the body produces less of the hormone. Disturbed sleep may be both a cause and an effect of the pain of fibromyalgia.
  - Many people connect the beginning of their fibromyalgia symptoms to a certain event. These events can include an illness such as the flu, an injury or surgery, or emotional trauma and stress. 1 An event of this type combined with other factors, such as increased sensitivity to pain and an ongoing sleep disturbance, may lead to fibromyalgia syndrome in some people.

#### 4. What is etiology & Pathology in TCM

- (1) Exterior evils (Wind, cold & damp) invade M & C
  - (2) Emotional disorders lead to Qi stagnation of Liver
  - (3) Qi, blood or Yin, Yang deficiency fails to nourish body
- } Pain

#### 5. How does the Western medicine diagnose the disease?

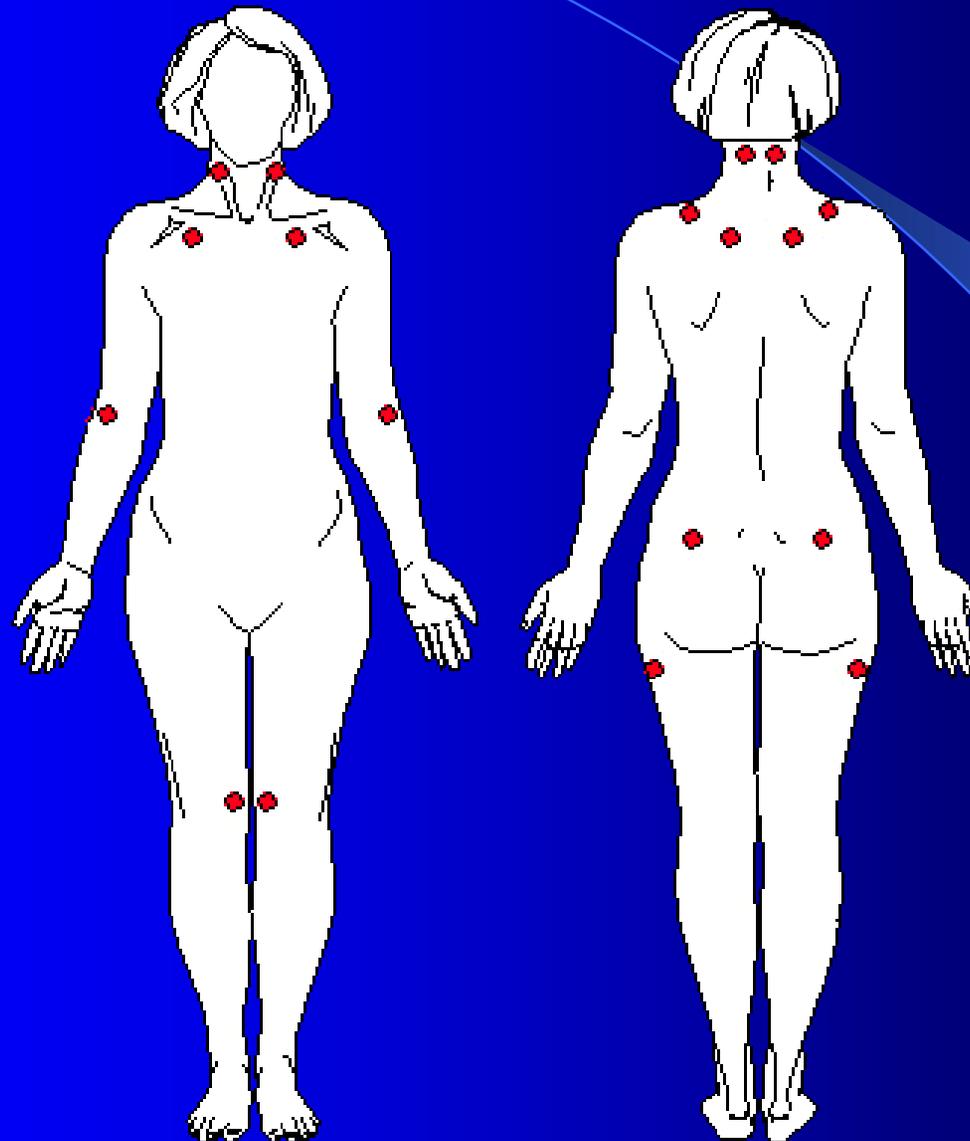
##### **ACR Fibromyalgia Diagnostic Criteria**

Fibromyalgia is a distinctive syndrome which can be diagnosed with clinical precision. It may occur in the absence (primary fibromyalgia) or presence of other conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis or systemic lupus erythematosus (concomitant fibromyalgia). It is rarely secondary to another disease, in the sense that alleviation of the associated disease also cures the fibromyalgia. It may be confidently diagnosed in patients with widespread musculo-skeletal pain and multiple tender points.

- **The American College of Rheumatology 1990 Criteria for the Classification of Fibromyalgia**
- **History of widespread pain has been present for at least three months**
- **Definition: Pain is considered widespread when all of the following are present:**
  - Pain in both sides of the body
  - Pain above and below the waist In addition, axial skeletal pain (cervical spine, anterior chest, thoracic spine or low back pain) must be present. Low back pain is considered lower segment pain.
- **Pain in 11 of 18 tender point sites on digital palpation**  
Definition: Pain, on digital palpation, must be present in at least 11 of the following 18 tender point sites:
  - Occiput (2) - at the suboccipital muscle insertions.
  - Low cervical (2) - at the anterior aspects of the intertransverse spaces at C5-C7.

- Trapezius (2) - at the midpoint of the upper border.
- Supraspinatus (2) - at origins, above the scapula spine near the medial border.
- Second rib (2) - upper lateral to the second costochondral junction.
- Lateral epicondyle (2) - 2 cm distal to the epicondyles.
- Gluteal (2) - in upper outer quadrants of buttocks in anterior fold of muscle.
- Greater trochanter (2) - posterior to the trochanteric prominence.
- Knee (2) - at the medial fat pad proximal to the joint line.
- Digital palpation should be performed with an approximate force of 4 kg. A tender point has to be painful at palpation, not just "tender."

# Illustration of Tender Points



6. What is difference between the fibromyalgia & Chronic fatigue syndrome?

[fibromyalgia and CFS\(1\).xls](#)

## 7. What is the modern **TREATMENT OPTIONS**

There is no one medication that works for all fibromyalgia patients. Medical professional and patient must work together to determine what medication or combination of medications is most effective for each individual patient. It can be time consuming, but the results can be tremendous. [Frequently Prescribed Fibromyalgia Medications](#) is a good place to start. (As of April 2007, there is no medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use in the treatment of fibromyalgia. However, there is research backing up the use of medications “off-label” for the treatment of fibromyalgia, and research studies that will lead to the approval of medications continue.)

- Researchers and practicing physicians continue to seek even better options. Abstracts of published articles highlighting newer medications and studies are included here.
- [Pramipexole](#)  
[Tramadol/Acetaminophen](#)  
[Milnacipran](#)  
[Pregabalin](#)  
[Duloxetine](#)  
[Pindolol](#)  
[Ketamine](#)  
[Gabapentin](#)

## Vitamins

Vitamin and mineral supplementation can help boost immune system and help supply energy. To health is a recognized leader in quality supplements for fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome and chronic pain.

- **Exercise**
- Exercise is critical for fibromyalgia patients. It has an impact on the quality of sleep and helps to keep unaffected muscles strong to improve quality of life.
- **Sleep**  
Non restorative sleep is a frequent symptom of fibromyalgia. There is much you can do, as a patient, to try to improve sleep.
- **Education**  
Education and self management is critical in chronic conditions like fibromyalgia.

## 8. How does the TCM for the disease (including Tuina, Cupping )

### (1) Wind, cold, dampness in meridian

Manifestations:

Treatment:

Formula:

Points:

### (2) Liver Qi stagnation

Manifestations:

Treatment:

Formula:

Points:

### (3) Middle Qi sinking

Manifestations:

Treatment:

Formula:

Points:

### (4) Qi, Blood deficiency of Sp and heart

Manifestations:

Treatment:

Formula:

Points:

(5) Yin deficiency of heart, liver, KI

Manifestations:

Treatment:

Formula:

Points:

(6) Yang deficiency of heart or KI

Manifestations:

Treatment:

Formula:

Points:

## Notes:

1. Relax
2. Diet
3. Maintain the treatment