



FIBROKNOWLEDGE

DISCUSSING FIBROMYALGIA
WITH YOUR LOVED ONES

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UNDERSTANDING FIBROMYALGIA PAIN—FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

As you struggle to come to terms with your condition, your family and friends do too. Missed activities aren't just hard on you. And it's never easy to see a loved one in pain.

Education is important. The more your loved ones understand fibromyalgia, the more supportive they might be. For example, people with fibromyalgia may have problems with their memory (sometimes called "fibro fog"). If this is true for you, explain to your loved ones that you care about what they tell you. But "fibro fog" is a common fibromyalgia problem.

Communication is important too. You need to be aware of how your illness is affecting your family and friends. How are they coping? How can you help them?

The best way to find out? Ask.

BE OPEN WITH YOUR LOVED ONES ABOUT YOUR FIBROMYALGIA SYMPTOMS

Communication works both ways. You probably don't want to be seen as a "complainer." Many fibromyalgia sufferers try to put on a happy face.

But in order to let your loved ones help you, they need to know what kinds of things might make your symptoms worse. The following list might help you get this conversation started.

In a survey conducted by the National Fibromyalgia Association, people with fibromyalgia reported that the following factors aggravated their symptoms.

STRESSOR	% of PEOPLE WHO SAID THIS STRESSOR AGGRAVATES THEIR SYMPTOMS
Emotional distress	83%
Weather changes	80%
Sleeping problems	79%
Strenuous activity	70%
Mental stress	68%
Worrying	60%
Car travel	57%
Family conflicts	52%
Physical injuries	50%
Physical inactivity	50%
Infections	43%
Allergies	37%
Low to moderate physical activity	36%
Lack of emotional support	36%
Time zone changes	34%
Airplane travel	34%
Perfectionism	32%

Table source: Bennett RM, Jones J, Turk DC, Russell IJ, Matallana L. An internet survey of 2,596 people with fibromyalgia. *BMC Musculoskelet Disord.* 2007;8:27.

YOU ARE WORKING TOWARD THE SAME GOALS

You want to feel good. You want to get back to life. Your family and friends want that too. The journey to feeling better may not be direct or easy. But the fact is your loved ones' support will help you greatly along the way.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FIBROMYALGIA AND CHRONIC WIDESPREAD PAIN CAN BE FOUND AT FIBROCENTER.COM