

Managing Fibromyalgia



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Foods That Can Help Pain - and Why

Just as there are foods that can increase or aggravate pain, there are also foods that can decrease or ease pain. ***Indeed, every single thing you eat or drink either feeds your pain or eases it!***

Some of the most helpful foods and drinks for fighting pain are antioxidants; and antioxidants come in many varieties...even herbs and spices! But there are other ways to help symptoms too...boosting the immune system, for example, and cooling down the fires of inflammation.

- 1) *Antioxidants.* Antioxidants are your body's #1 defense. They are great immune boosters and inflammation-fighters, but best of all, antioxidants are your main line of defense against Oxidative Stress! <http://www.lifeextensionvitamins.com/about-antioxidants-and-oxidative-stress.html>. Oxidative stress is basically a condition where a gross over abundance of free radicals are running amok within your body, wreaking havoc!

Antioxidants neutralize excess free radicals. Free radicals are *not* Fibro-friendly. They latch onto good healthy cells, and render them powerless and ineffective. They often cause the death of cells, which in turn creates aging and countless forms of illness. And they create inflammation, instigating autoimmune conditions of the worst kinds. Antioxidants not only neutralize these little nasties, but they also *help reverse the damage* that the free radicals have created! How's that for a healthy food source! <http://www.hivehealthmedia.com/health-benefits-antioxidants/>

Antioxidants are found in fruits, veggies, berries, nuts, legumes, beans, seeds and dark leafy greens... and whole grains. <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/05/070509161030.htm>. As seen in the previous article, "Foods That Can Aggravate Fibromyalgia Pain," gluten found in whole wheat, rye, and barley can be major pain-making factors for a lot of us. But there are many whole grains *without gluten* such as rice (wild & brown), buckwheat, oats (organic steel cut), quinoa, amaranth, and more that are full of antioxidants, and so much more! <http://www.wholegrainscouncil.org/whole-grains-101/gluten-free-whole-grains>

Antioxidants are also found in orange juice, apple juice, cranberry juice and all the specialty fruit juices like Açai, Mangostene, Noni, Goji and so on. But all of these contain sugar too, and it's nice to know that a mere shot glass-full of any of these juices is quite sufficient for the benefits. The same is true of dark chocolate – a little goes a long way in helping. Besides, a very pertinent fact that you should know is that each antioxidant is work specific - each works in a different part of

your body or system, so to speak. Therefore, instead of eating a lot of one fruit or veggie or nut, it's best to eat a wide variety of these healthy foods—a bit of each as it were—to cover all your bases.

Note: Two very potent and powerful antioxidants are:

~Tart Cherries - juice, capsules or 8-10 actual cherries. They are also called Montmorency cherries, and have been shown to help arthritis pain, muscle pain, back pain and neurodegenerative pain in many people. Aside from fact that they are great antioxidants, they have a substance called phenolics, which are anti-inflammatories. These cherries, and their juice, have been used for gout for centuries because they reduce uric acid and toxins, and reduce inflammation. All cherries have these phenolics, specifically anthocyanins which are COX-2 inhibitors (pain-relievers like Celebrex and NSAIDS, but without side-effects). Generally speaking the more dark and tart the cherry, the more of this substance they have - the less sugar it has too. http://www.naturalnews.com/033443_cherries_pain_remedies.html

~Green Tea. Green tea contains the amino acid L-Theanine, a stress reliever that stimulates alpha brain waves increasing mental alertness, while also helping to improve your quality of sleep. L-Theanine increases Glutathione, SOD, GABA, (neurotransmitters that also act as your body's own super antioxidants), serotonin and more.

<http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=146>

The polyphenols, specifically catechins called EGCG, in green tea are potent antioxidants which act as COX-2 inhibitors (pain-relievers, like Celebrex and NSAIDS, but without any side-effects), *and* they have been shown to *kill* cancer cells, as well as *inhibit the growth of existing cancer cells*, e.g. prostate and breast cancer cells and much more.

<http://www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/green-tea-000255.htm>

Generally speaking 3 or more cups of green tea per day is greatly beneficial. A single cup of green tea has approx 11-20 mg of caffeine, about 1/3 that of coffee; even so, the L-Theanine and catechins seem to nullify the caffeine's effect.

http://www.naturalnews.com/034227_green_tea_caffeine.html

- 2) *Omega 3 EPA-DHA*. These essential fatty acids are found in dark meat fish like salmon, sardines, halibut, tuna, and algae or seaweed for the most part. But they can also be found in wild game like turkey and venison, and in "free range" meats, chicken and eggs. "Free range" means that they have been raised off the land and *not* feed grain or corn at any time. These animals create their own EPA-DHA and pass it along to us, naturally. Unfortunately these free range meats are rarely found in your local grocery store. Check your local Farmer's Markets and health food stores. You *can* find salmon, tuna, mackerel, sardines, halibut and even seaweed in your local grocery.

Omega 3 EPA and DHA are natural *anti-inflammatories* and are essential fatty acids. This means they are *essential* to your body. In fact, DHA makes up a huge bulk of your brain matter! These fatty acids serve as the outer coating, or membrane, of each cell in your body and facilitate the movement of nutrients *in* and waste *out* of each cell. Essential? You bet! But when we don't have

enough Omega 3 EPA-DHA (fish oil), your body will use any fat for the membrane around your cells, which can make them tough and rubbery, forcing each cell to work harder and harder to get the nutrients in, and often can't get the waste out. This can damage cells. And it definitely makes them less efficient in their work, not to mention tired from all the extra work. Tired cells age faster, making YOU age faster. And you are often weaker, and more subject to illnesses. THIS is why EPA and DHA are *essential*.

According to the many thousands of studies, EPA-DHA (fish oil, which has been used in the studies) has PROVEN to help depression, inflammation, bone & joint pain, macular degeneration, clarity and focus, heart arrhythmia, cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's and much more.

Essential? You bet! <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22332096>

Please check out my Newsletter, "Why Fibromyalgia Needs Omega 3 EPA-DHA" for doses, uses, brands and how to shop for it!

<http://hosted.verticalresponse.com/790349/056f9c5a43/1470670689/df13eed2b5/>

- 3) *Omega 9*. This fat is not exactly essential, but it is a very healthy fat nonetheless. It is a monounsaturated fat. Foods containing Omega 9 are olives, olive oil, peanut butter, almond butter, raw nuts like hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, cashews, pistachios and pecans, dry roasted nuts, unprocessed and unheated (*unhydrogenated*) sunflower oil, safflower oil, linoleic oil. A little goes a long way here—for example, 8 to 12 nuts provide all the fats you need without going over the calorie barrier. Monounsaturated fats have been shown to reduce bad (LDL) cholesterol, help the heart in many ways, help the colon, and the brain. And they may help you live longer according to studies of the Mediterranean diet, which uses generous amounts of olive oil and other monounsaturated fats. Healthy fats help our cause too. They help inflammation, the immune system... and pain. <http://www.naturalwellbeing.com/learning-center/Omega9>
- 4) *Coconut Oil*. I know. It's a saturated fat. This natural fat is not evil. It's the man-made saturated fats that we must avoid - the veggie and seed oils that have been manipulated through hydrogenation and turned into trans fats and saturated fats.

Coconut oil on the other hand is not only a Good saturated fat, it is a GREAT saturated fat! At www.coconutoil.com you will find links to lots of PubMed articles and other research studies touting its MANY benefits. There are other sites (2,880,000 pages on Google) listing 100 uses for coconut oil, or 161 benefits of coconut oil, and Dr. Mercola's excellent articles, Natural News or Green Med Info's excellent articles...all are filled with positive, extremely healthy benefits of coconut oil. Why? Coconut oil is anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, anti-microbial, anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, antibiotic, anti-parasitic and anti-viral. It has been found very helpful in fighting the HIV virus, the MRSA virus, Hep C, Candida, Crohn's and much more! It has greatly helped Alzheimer's. I see only good things here, saturated fat or not.

http://www.naturalnews.com/036156_Coconut_oil_superfood_healing.html

- 5) *Vitamin D3*. Vitamin D3 is obviously not a food. In fact it's not even a vitamin; it's a hormone. And it is one of those essentials for our body that can *definitely* help pain. Recent research has found that insufficient levels of this essential "vitamin" are extremely common, especially in those with Fibromyalgia. This insufficiency is linked to depression, autoimmune diseases, osteoporosis, lowered immune function, diabetes, breast cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure and much more. <http://www.drfranklipman.com/symptoms-diseases-associated-with-vitamin-d-deficiency/> Ask your doctor to test your level of Vitamin D. It's something he may not think about, so remind him.

Some foods with Vitamin D3 are wild salmon, herring, sardines, mackerel, egg yolks and mushrooms. Vitamin D3 also comes in supplements. These foods and/or a vitamin D3 supplement are generally required on a regular daily basis to maintain normal levels of this essential hormone for most people, especially in the winter. Some Vitamin D can be made by your body with exposure to sunlight *if...* you are healthy, under age 40, have light-colored skin and live south of the Mason-Dixon line – not exactly a description of the majority of those with Fibromyalgia.

According to The Vitamin D Council, Vitamin D3 is the most beneficial form and doses recommended now are 1000 to 5000 IU per day. <http://www.vitamindcouncil.org/about-vitamin-d/how-to-get-your-vitamin-d/vitamin-d-supplementation/> I personally take 6000 IU per day in the summer and 8,000 IU per day in the winter. This maintains a good normal for me. Contrary to the long held notion that 20 ng/ml is "normal" for everyone, there has been a new consensus telling that 50-70 ng/ml is much more helpful and should actually be the new normal. (Some doctors believe that 70-100 ng/ml should be normal for those with a chronic illness.) http://www.naturalnews.com/038219_vitamin_D_Alzheimers_disease_cognitive_performance.html

- 6) *B-Vitamins*. Again, not exactly food. But foods contain B-Vitamins, specifically oats and whole grains, nuts, avocados, potatoes, legumes, beans, bananas, turkey, liver and tuna, to name a few. B-vitamins are crucial for pain and for energy. They are also highly necessary to the immune system, brain function and NERVE pain!
<http://www.drweil.com/drw/u/ART02717/Neuropathy.html>

When you are chronically ill, your body uses up B-vitamins at an alarming rate, and it may be prudent to either eat more of these foods or take a good B-Vitamin Complex supplement (or both) to cover all your bases.

B12. Over and above the regular B's, there is B12. It is also quite essential, all on its own, especially for energy production. But it can be harder to acquire for a vegetarian because it is not found in plants. B12 is found in most meats, shrimp, chicken and dairy products like eggs and

milk. Health food stores carry B12 as a supplement, but be aware that it is not very absorbable as a tablet or within a multi-vitamin.

The most absorbable forms of B12 are: liquid drops or spray, patches, lozenges or sublingual tablets. These forms of this important vitamin go directly into the bloodstream, bypassing the digestive tract where it would be dissolved by stomach acids. Ask your doctor to check your B12 levels. If you are low, as is common in those with Fibromyalgia, he may prescribe injections for a period of time to bring levels back up to normal. But be aware also, that our bodies use up this vitamin (and indeed *all* vitamins) daily, and we need to constantly replenish it daily through diet and/or supplementation. <http://products.mercola.com/vitamin-b12-spray/>

- 7) *Turmeric (Curcumin)* and other spice like Ginger, Cinnamon, Cayenne, Cloves, and more – are antioxidants. Turmeric is a centuries old healer. It is an antiviral, anti-fungal, anti-bacterial, anti-cancer, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory. It is another COX-2 inhibitor (a pain-reliever like Celebrex or NSAIDS, but without side-effects). It is especially excellent for arthritis pain, muscle pain, morning pain and joint stiffness. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/andrew-weil-md/turmeric-health-have-a-happy-new-year_b_798328.html .

~*Ginger* can be freshly ground from the rhizome available in most grocery stores. It has been used for ages as an anti-inflammatory and for helping muscle and joint pain, as well as headaches. It's also used to help nausea and diarrhea.

~*Cinnamon* has been used for centuries to relieve flatulence (gas), to improve digestion, nausea, and PMS queasiness. But it's most beneficial trait is for diabetics. Recent studies have shown that half a teaspoon of cinnamon taken daily may help control insulin resistance, and even prevent Type 2 Diabetes by significantly reducing blood sugar levels! Visit WebMD for more information on the new studies <http://diabetes.webmd.com/cinnamon-and-benefits-for-diabetes>.

~*Cayenne, Cloves, Coriander, and Fennel* have wonderful health benefits too.

<http://www.rd.com/slideshows/10-healing-herbs-and-spices/#slideshow=slide1>

All these spices are also available as supplements. All are antioxidants and anti-inflammatories. All are carminative (easing flatulence and digestion) and have a warming effect, which aids in circulation and joint pain.

- 8) *Holy Basil (Tulsi)* and other herbs like sweet basil, rosemary, sage, parsley and thyme. Tulsi is very often found in the form of tea, although capsules are also available. Sweet basil (cooking basil) is somewhat similar, but much milder in effect. Holy Basil is antioxidant, anti-bacterial, anti-viral, anti-inflammatory and *so much more*. It is in fact, an *adaptogen*, which means that it helps reduce stress and increase energy! It helps eliminate toxins and even helps reduce cell damage from radiation... TVs, X-rays, microwaves, the sun! <http://www.ayurveda.cz/en/ayurvedic-tulsi-tea.htm>

~*Rosemary*. Rosemary comes in essential oils, capsules and as a spice for cooking. It is an antioxidant, anti-bacterial, antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, and aids in helping the liver to flush out toxins. It helps stimulate memory and increase concentration. It helps menstrual cramps and eases respiratory problems and pain. http://www.anniesremedy.com/herb_detail51.php
http://www.naturalnews.com/030814_rosemary_herbs.html

~*Sage*. Sage is an age old, excellent antioxidant, anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, antiseptic, and anti-inflammatory. It comes in an essential oil and as an herb for cooking. It is full of B-vitamins and folic acid, which helps so many of our symptoms. It is an aid to menopausal symptoms like night sweats and hot flashes. It is a memory enhancer, and is greatly helpful during cold and flu season!
<http://www.antioxidants-for-health-and-longevity.com/benefits-of-sage.html>
http://www.naturalnews.com/038287_immortality_herbs_Reishi.html

~*Parsley*. Parsley is also an antioxidant, anti-bacterial, anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory. It's rich in folic acid which helps keep homocysteine in check. Its high content of Vitamin C also helps protect against colds and flu and may even help Rheumatoid Arthritis.
<http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=100#healthbenefits>

~*Thyme*. Thyme is available as an essential oil and as an herb for cooking. It is antioxidant, anti-microbial (helps prevent staph infection and more), anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and anti-inflammatory. It is used for treating respiratory problems such as colds and flu, and helps relieve and soothe mucus. It is also used as an antiseptic for mosquito bites and cuts. It is so much more.
<http://lifestyle.iloveindia.com/lounge/benefits-of-thyme-6079.html>

- 9) *Yogurt*. Yogurt is a probiotic food that *greatly* helps intestinal issues, including gluten sensitivity. People with mild lactose intolerance may find yogurt quite soothing too. It's been shown that lactase, the enzyme for digesting lactose, is created during the process of making yogurt.
<http://www.askdrsears.com/topics/family-nutrition/yogurt/10-reasons-yogurt-top-health-food> .

Take care to choose a *non*-aspartame yogurt, with low or NO-sugar content. Be sure to compare sugar content in the various brands available in your area. Popular brands are: Plain Greek yogurt, Mountain High, Fage Greek yogurt, Cascade, Brummel & Brown, Brown Cow, Chobani, Stonyfield, Oikos, Dannon Low-Fat (read the label on fat-free yogurts – they often add extra sugar or aspartame for flavor).

The good bacteria in yogurt help you heal your intestines, improve digestion, improve the bioavailability of nutrients, help boost your overall immune system and help healing overall. It is full of beneficial ingredients like protein, calcium, Vitamins B2, B12, Vitamins A and D, magnesium, potassium, and more. Visit WebMD for more info:
<http://www.webmd.com/diet/features/benefits-of-yogurt>.

If you must take antibiotics for health reasons, it is important to follow up with yogurt and/or probiotics. Antibiotics are necessary to kill bad bacteria, but they also kill the necessary, GOOD, bacteria. So after the antibiotic treatment is completed, it is then time to begin replenishing the

good bacteria with yogurt and/or probiotics in capsule form. When intestinal issues are up close and personal, and yogurt is impractical or unavailable, probiotics can be used in supplement form- capsules that will do the trick. Acidophilus and/or a probiotic complex may be exactly what's needed. Dr. Ohhira's Probiotics <http://www.drohhiraprobiotics.com/> are my favorite!



All of the above not only fight inflammation, help neutralize free radicals, help repair free radical damage, and boost the immune system, they also taste great! Go shopping today. And shop wisely!

Deidre Rawlings, PhD, ND, MH, CNC has an excellent newsletter on this topic, please feel free to sign up on her website <http://www.foodsforfibromyalgia.com/>

If you personally find other foods that can help your pain, please e-mail me at patichandler@yahoo.com and let me know. I'd love to share this information with others. If a certain food helps YOU, chances are it may help others also.

Thanks. We all have to look out for each other, right?

