Physiotherapy Department

Fibromyalgia / Chronic Widespread Pain

What is Fibromyalgia?

"Fibromyalgia" or "Chronic Widespread Pain" as its modern name suggests, is a condition where pain is widespread throughout the body. It is estimated that this affects nearly 1 in 20 people around the world. This condition affects more women than men and the onset occurs typically between 30 and 60 years of age.

Causes

To date, there is no known specific cause of fibromyalgia but research has identified that there are a range of changes that occur in the way that the body deals with pain but as yet it is not understood what triggers the changes.

Symptoms

The symptoms are variable from person to person but they may include:

- Widespread pain
- Extreme sensitivity
- Stiffness/muscle tension
- Fatigue (extreme tiredness)
- Poor sleep
- Poor memory/concentration
- Headaches
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Poor regulation of body temperature/ feeling too hot or too cold
- Anxiety/depression
- Restless legs

Managing the condition

Fibromyalgia/chronic widespread pain is a long term condition whereby the symptoms may come and go but unlikely to resolve completely. It is important to learn how to manage your own condition.

Exercise

Although fatigue is one of the main symptoms of fibromyalgia/chronic widespread pain, a gentle graded exercise programme can be beneficial to relieve the stiffness, improve strength and confidence, improve circulation and helps to improve the feeling of well-being due to the release of endorphins which are hormones that provide us with feelings of happiness and can reduce pain levels.

This could be a graded walking plan or a gentle exercise regime that you can do at home. Exercises that include simple joint movements and gentle muscle stretches are a good way to maintain flexibility and as a result help with the control of pain.

When you start exercising it is normal to feel tired and a little more sore initially so it is important that you start with a small amount, within your range of confidence and progress slowly over a number of days. This way you will improve and begin to enjoy the benefits.

compassionate care

Pacing your activity

Pacing means balancing periods of activity with periods of rest. It means not pushing yourself beyond your limits only to suffer for it the next day. This is very important when taking on a new activity or exercise programme.

Relaxation

Relaxation techniques such as diaphragmatic breathing techniques,talking therapy CDs or DVDs, meditation or simple distraction activities can help to ease tension pains.

Pain Management

Ask your GP for help with medications to control your pain, ask about referral to local pain management programmes to learn more about coping strategies for long term self- management, physiotherapy for guidance on exercise and lifestyle management and if you suffer from anxiety or depression ask about professional support or medications that may help.

Visit the "Rheumatology" and "Pain" pages on the Physiotherapy website for more information

http://www.cht.nhs.uk/services/clinical-services/physiotherapy-outpatients/patient-careinformation/

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Physiotherapy Department
Huddersfield Royal Infirmary
Telephone No: (01484) 342434

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

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