

Foods That Chronic Pain Sufferers Need to Avoid

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Chronic pain is a pervasive issue and fibromyalgia is a very common form. It is a chronic condition whose symptoms include muscle and tissue pain, fatigue, depression, and sleep disturbances.

Recent data suggests that central sensitization, in which neurons in your spinal cord become sensitized by inflammation or cell damage, may be involved in the way fibromyalgia sufferers process pain.

Certain chemicals in the foods you eat may trigger the release of neurotransmitters that heighten this sensitivity.

Although there have been only a handful of studies on diet and fibromyalgia, the following eating rules can't hurt, and may help, when dealing with chronic pain.

Limit Sugar as Much as Possible. Increased insulin levels will typically dramatically worsen pain. So you will want to limit all sugars and this would typically include fresh fruit juices. Whole fresh fruit is the preferred method for consuming fruit products.

If you are overweight, have high blood pressure, high cholesterol or diabetes, you will also want to limit grains as much as possible as they are metabolized very similarly to grains. This would also include organic unprocessed grains. Wheat and gluten grains are the top ones to avoid.

Eat fresh foods. Eating a diet of fresh foods, devoid of preservatives and additives, may ease symptoms triggered by coexisting conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

It's also a good idea to buy organic food when possible, as it's best to avoid pesticides and chemicals. However, fresh is best. So if you have to choose between local, fresh, non-organic and organic but wilting – go with fresh, and clean properly.

Avoid caffeine. Fibromyalgia is believed to be linked to an imbalance of brain chemicals that control mood, and it is often linked with inadequate sleep and fatigue. The temptation is to artificially and temporarily eliminate feelings of fatigue with stimulants like caffeine, but this approach does more harm than good in the long run. Though caffeine provides an initial boost of energy, it is no substitute for sleep, and is likely to keep you awake.

Try avoiding nightshade vegetables. Nightshade vegetables like tomatoes, potatoes, and eggplant may trigger arthritis and pain conditions in some people.

Be Careful with Your Fats. Animal based omega-3 fats like DHA and EPA have been touted as a heart-healthy food, and they may help with pain, as well. They can help reduce inflammation and improve brain function. At the same time, you want to eliminate all trans fat and fried foods, as these will promote inflammation.

Use yeast sparingly. Consuming yeast may also contribute to the growth of yeast fungus, which can contribute to pain.

Avoid pasteurized dairy. Many fibromyalgia sufferers have trouble digesting milk and dairy products. However, many find that raw dairy products, especially from grass fed organic sources, are well tolerated.

Cut down on carbs. About 90 percent of fibromyalgia patients have low adrenal functioning, which affects metabolism of carbohydrates and may lead to hypoglycemia.

Avoid aspartame. The artificial sweetener found in some diet sodas and many sugar-free sweets is part of a chemical group called excitotoxins, which activate neurons that can increase your sensitivity to pain.

Avoid additives. Food additives such as monosodium glutamate (MSG) often cause trouble for pain patients. MSG is an excitatory neurotransmitter that may stimulate pain receptors; glutamate levels in spinal fluid have been shown to correlate with pain levels in fibromyalgia patients.

Stay away from junk food. Limit or eliminate fast food, candy, and vending-machine products. In addition to contributing to weight gain and the development of unhealthy eating habits, these diet-wreckers may also irritate your muscles, disrupt your sleep, and compromise your immune system.