

## How To Properly Diagnose Fibromyalgia

### Diagnosis

A Fibromyalgia Diagnosis can be difficult to ascertain, although a qualified physician who is familiar with the illness can help make a correct diagnosis which is important so you can begin to take care of yourself and your discomfort.

- How to Diagnose Fibromyalgia?
- 18 Tender Point Locations Used in Diagnosing Fibromyalgia
- What are the Differential Tests Used for the Diagnosis of FM Syndrome?

### How to Diagnose Fibromyalgia?

FMS is extremely difficult, but is confirmed using the tender point examination. The physician must rely on the patient's history and the symptoms described to ensure a correct and accurate diagnosis. There are no specific laboratory tests or x-ray examinations which show abnormalities. Initially this led many physicians to consider that FMS signs and symptoms, were in "heads of the patients", or that patients had a form of masked depression known as hypochondriasis. Extensive psychological tests have shown that these assumptions are unfounded. At present, the fibromyalgia diagnosis is based primarily on taking a detailed history and an accurate manual examination of tender points, specific areas of tenderness in muscles. These locations are called "Tender Points", sometimes mistaken for trigger points.

The tender point examination is based on the standardized criteria of the American College of Rheumatology. Proper implementation of the examination determines the presence of 18 multiple characteristic locations. These tender point locations, often mistaken as trigger point locations, are painful when pressure is applied over these points. The guidelines require that the patient must have widespread aching for at least 3 months at a minimum of 11 locations on the body that are abnormally tender to touch under relatively mild pressure.

It is estimated that it may take up to five years for a patient to get an accurate diagnosis, as many physicians are still not adequately informed or educated about FMS. Another essential point that must be considered is the presence of other similar overlapping syndromes such as: FMS and Lupus, FMS and Chronic Fatigue, Rheumatoid Arthritis, and Hypothyroidism - mimicing the FMS diagnosis. FM Syndrome is not a diagnosis of excluding other diseases only, but must be diagnosed on its own characteristic feature of a tender point evaluation.

### 18 Tender Point Locations Used in Diagnosing FMS

### What Are The Tests Used In Diagnosing FM Syndrome?

FMS symptoms often overlap other medical conditions. The physician will usually request a series of blood tests to differentially diagnose to look for other possible conditions that might mimic FM Syndrome such as:

- Hypothyroidism - a low thyroid hormone typically causing fatigue, cold intolerance, muscle aches and pain, and weight gain
- Anemia - which may lead to fatigue, and exercise intolerance
- Abnormally High or Low Levels of Calcium in the Blood
- Muscle Disorders - can be checked with a specific blood test called the CPK
- Some Inflammatory Disorders - can be detected by testing the blood for inflammation using the ESR test
- Depression - Knowing whether this is present or not may have a profound impact on treatment

the tender point examination can help to Diagnose Fibromyalgia.

Learn more