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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

No Simple Treatment For Fibromyalgia

Last week I discussed what fibromyalgia is and some of the criteria that must be fulfilled to receive a proper diagnosis. If you have already been diagnosed with Fibromyalgia, then you are very much aware that there is no simple treatment. In most cases, it is what the patient can do for themselves rather than what the health care practitioner can do for them.

Like most chiropractors, I am currently treating many Fibromyalgia patients. As with any syndrome, some patients respond well and others are very difficult. The muscles of a Fibromyalgia patient are often very tight and extremely tender to the touch. These tight muscles attach to many different bones throughout the body. These bones may be the vertebrae of the neck or back, the pelvis, the shoulders, and even the knees. When these tight muscles are applying a constant pull on the bones, the joints at that area will not have their full movement. When any joint has a restricted movement, it will eventually begin to feel "stiff" and "achey". If this situation is left untreated, the joints often become quite painful. When any patient, with Fibromyalgia or not, is experiencing pain in a joint, the body will try to protect that area by tightening the muscles even more. You begin with just tight and sore muscles. Then, you start to get stiff and sore joints because these tight muscles are limiting the normal joint movement. You can now see how the muscle spasm from Fibromyalgia causes joint stiffness, which leads to joint pain, which leads to more muscle spasm, which leads to further joint stiffness, which leads to even more joint pain. This cycle propagates itself until you cannot sleep at night, you feel fatigued, and any amount of activity causes pain.

In terms of conservative or natural treatment, this is where the Chiropractor and Massage Therapists come in. The Chiropractor is well trained in identifying what joints are being affected and how to restore their movement. This will allow the joints to become healthier and less painful. The Chiropractic treatment is most successful when in conjunction with Massage Therapy. Without addressing the muscle spasm at the same time, the joints will just become stiff and sore again. Patients may also find that they require some medication from their Medical Doctor to help them sleep or decrease the pain.

As I mentioned earlier, it is unreasonable for anyone to expect a team of health care practitioners to decrease their Fibromyalgia symptoms without the patient doing their part. Because people with this syndrome find it painful to move, they often limit their physical activity. Their muscles become weak and tight from inactivity and the tendons, ligaments, and cartilage are more prone to injury. Despite the extra pain that it may cause, patients should try to get even a few minutes of exercise per day. The key is to

start gradually and do only low impact, higher repetition exercises. A short series of stretches should also be done daily. We often have our Certified Personal Trainer/Rehabilitation Assistant give sessions of instruction on what exercises should and shouldn't be done. Regardless of who develops your program, one exercise program will not necessarily suit everyone. It is for this reason that I have not shown a series of exercises or stretches in this article. Get some professional help before you get too keen and make things worse.

If you were expecting to find out that there was a simple and quick treatment for Fibromyalgia, I am sorry to say that it doesn't exist. There are many potential causes of the symptoms and there is no one Chiropractic Doctor, Medical Doctor, or Massage Therapist that can do it all for you. It is generally a team approach that requires you to do your part as well.