

Health Care Professionals & FMS Nutrient Therapy



Rae Gleason

Rae Gleason has seen many changes regarding fibromyalgia (FMS) since the startup of the Fibromyalgia Research Association in Oregon in 1993. With Rae's coordination, the Association held the first meeting for researchers to share and discuss individual findings in one place. Ms. Gleason also created continuing medical educational programs for health care professionals (HCPs) at the National Fibromyalgia Association (California). She is the current Medical Education and Research Director with the National Fibromyalgia and Chronic Pain Association (Utah). Here she discusses HCPs' views on FMS supplement therapy.

What supplements are HCPs interested in?

Sadly, most HCPs know very little about nutritional supplements and how they apply to FMS. If you want to get your HCP involved, offer published articles by other HCPs already treating FMS. Then the HCP can determine if that particular regimen is right for you. Give the HCP time to read the article so he/she can discuss the results at your next appointment. Or give your HCP a copy of Dr. Mark Pellegrino's book (*Up Close and Personal*) with the chapter on nutrients marked. Dr. Pellegrino has treated more than 25,000 FMS patients and has the disorder himself. Finding a local naturopathic HCP may be the most expedient way as most naturopaths already know the benefits of supplements in treating FMS and chronic pain. Thus the HCP educates the patient instead of the other way around.

Name some FMS nutrient research.

Low magnesium levels were noted in the early 1990s (Drs. Jorge Flechas, Thomas Romano, I. Jon Russell). Dr. Flechas's research found that malic acid added to magnesium was of benefit in treating FMS muscle pain. Dr. I. Jon Russell published on zinc and selenium deficiencies. Recently, low vitamin D levels in FMS have been found by a variety of researchers. Dr. M. Cordero's studies are on CoQ10 and mitochondria function in FMS. However, not much has been done in the science of an overall FMS nutritional program. Other research is listed in the references for this article.

Would nutrient tests be required?

Just as diagnostic tests are done to diagnose a patient and prescribe treatment, nutrient tests are of value for nutritional therapy. For example, vitamin D₃ and red blood cell magnesium test results can be used to determine amounts per individual patient. Periodic retesting is done to check for dose adjustments and to decide if other supplements should be added for a successful outcome. For more information, read *Vitamin D-cisions* by Dr. Mark Pellegrino and *Magnesium RBC Testing* in the TyH Online Library.

Do HCPs want to know about supplements?

Of the 20-plus continuing medical education programs I helped create and execute, most of them included nutritional supplement information along with the prescribed medications. This was not information I gave to the program; it came from medical doctors and research scientists who created the curriculums. Many physicians realize a multidisciplinary program is needed; one which includes correct medications, alternative therapies that incorporate nutritional supplements and even counseling, to help people adjust to living life with a chronic pain condition.

What other considerations are needed?

Two things: 1) better communication between HCPs and their patients and 2) help in designing patient self-management programs. FMS does not respond to one pill or one type of treatment; but a real commitment by both patient and treating HCP can make a difference in treatment outcome. For patients with a chronic illness, FMS and/or chronic pain, the body takes a tremendous beating just trying to keep regulated as close to normal as possible. They may not have the energy to make nutritious meals; so the body breaks down even more when it is not being fed the correct nutrients required to sustain life. Anyone who suffers from deep fatigue and poor sleep needs help with day to day nutrition. That's why a high potency multivitamin (like TyH's Multi-Gold™) is so beneficial to those with FMS and chronic pain.

Do you offer supplement education programs for HCPs?

The National Fibromyalgia & Chronic Pain Association is in the process of developing a professional HCP website. Once up and running it will offer several nutritional supplement programs and educational video presentations for HCPs.



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Advisor Q&A

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Any final words of advice?

If you plan to supplement and are inexperienced, you need to educate yourself about the benefits and risks. If you are on prescription meds, always consult your physician for drug-supplement interactions. For instance, a condition such as serotonin syndrome may occur if people take SSRI or SNRI medications and mix them with 5-HTP, a serotonin booster. Utilize a reputable, experienced company such as TyH and a trustworthy HCP to help you with the plethora of information and how it specifically relates to your condition(s). TyH offers a variety of educational tools such as access to articles in *Health Points*, along with a free informational online library.



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