



Dear Dr. Hoo,

Can you provide some insight into the natural treatments for fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia is a chronic disorder that has multiple symptoms which include musculoskeletal pain, multiple tender points in specific areas in the neck, shoulders, hips and spine, as well as disruptions in sleep resulting in muscle or joint stiffness, irritable bowel syndrome and anxiety.

While the cause of this disease is not fully understood, research indicates that disruptions in the body's metabolism of cellular energy may be a key factor. These disruptions may result from a history of physical injury (eg. motor vehicle accident), an underlying viral infection such as Epstein Barr virus or the tick-borne spirochete *Borrelia burgdorferi* resulting in Lyme Disease.

Clinical trials have indicated that providing ingredients which support our production of energy are beneficial in alleviating the symptoms of fibromyalgia. These ingredients may include magnesium, malic acid, coenzyme Q10 and certain B-vitamins like Vitamin B1, B3 and B6.

More recently, a study published in the *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Rheumatology* proposed the nutrient carnitine as a safe and potentially effective treatment for those suffering from fibromyalgia. In this study, patients with fibromyalgia received either carnitine (in the form of acetyl L-carnitine) or a placebo for over 3 months.

Patients receiving carnitine experienced a significant improvement in depression and musculo-skeletal pain with a reduction in the pain threshold and the number of positive tender points as well as overall improvement in their quality of life.

As always, a healthy dietary regimen with plenty water, rest and moderate exercise like walking or yoga should be maintained along with nutritional supplementation. If you or a loved one is suffering from fibromyalgia, please consult with your healthcare provider to ensure that your healthcare goals are addressed or call us for further information.

Dr. Aaron Hoo

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