

# Start Collecting Your Own Library of Resource Information

Every person who suffers from Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is looking for information to help them deal with this condition. We have found the following links (to the right) to be very helpful. We recommend that you keep these sites archived.

If you have found other sites that have been beneficial to you – our patient – please provide that information to us. TOGETHER we can work towards better outcomes in treatment and therapy if we stay abreast of the most recent scientific discoveries. Just remember our slogan: “Pain is not normal.” Contact us to determine what’s at the root of your pain and how we can work together to provide a better quality of life for you (or someone you love).

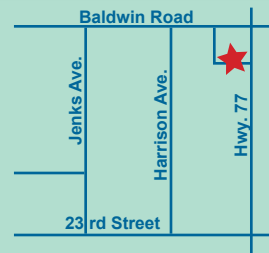
[www.arthritistoday.org/symptoms/fatigue/index.php](http://www.arthritistoday.org/symptoms/fatigue/index.php)

[www.womentowomen.com/understandyourbody/symptoms/fatigue](http://www.womentowomen.com/understandyourbody/symptoms/fatigue)

**National Fibromyalgia Association**  
([www.fmaware.org](http://www.fmaware.org))

[www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)

[www.HealthCentral.com](http://www.HealthCentral.com)



The Arthritis & Infusion Center

Call 850-873-6748 for an appointment  
VISIT US ONLINE AT: [www.DrCrayton.net](http://www.DrCrayton.net)



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# THE ARTHRITIS & INFUSION CENTER advocate

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## “If you say you hurt ... I believe you!”



Dr. Hulon E. Crayton  
Supervising Physician  
Medical Director

We were very gratified regarding the reception our inaugural newsletter received within this community. Our patients have actually brought in their copies of the first issue to discuss topics that were covered in conjunction with their treatment plan. (If you didn't receive the first issue, but would like access to it, go to our website and click on *The Arthritis and Infusion Center ADVOCATE* – Read Our Newsletter – icon.)

Within this publication, we are going to take an in-depth look at a much misunderstood condition – Fibromyalgia. You'll read my personal philosophy on the condition within the cover story, as well as medically based information that you will want to consider if you feel you may be experiencing this debilitating “stealth disease”.

We hope you'll find this issue to be very informative, but to ensure that you receive future newsletters, please go to our website [www.drcrayton.net](http://www.drcrayton.net) and click on the Mailing List icon. By registering at this location, you'll also receive (via e-mail or other avenues of your choice) regular medical bulletins that will be vital to your health and well being.

Thank you for your interest in our medical practice and we look forward to hearing from you in the future regarding any topics you'd like to see addressed within these pages. And, when you come into our office, just remember: There are no stupid questions! Tell us your concerns and we'll try our best to address them.

Sincerely,  
*Dr. Hulon Crayton*

Within the medical field, not all physicians believe in the condition referred to as Fibromyalgia. However, when I first meet with a patient, if they tell me they hurt ... I believe them! Doctors may look at an x-ray and just because it looks normal, they may assume that the patient is not experiencing any pain. Unfortunately, Fibromyalgia has no definitive way to diagnosis the condition, because there are no lab tests or x-rays that can determine this insidious disease. Conversely, an abnormal x-ray might not show the real source of the person's pain.

The way I approach the diagnosis of any disease is by compiling a thorough history of the patient in combination with a good physical. After reviewing that data, I listen to what the patient has to say about their symptoms and then ask them the right questions to finalize the most accurate assessment. It's truly a team effort between me and the patient to reach a definitive conclusion regarding their health needs.

Another misconception that people need to realize is that Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome are not the same thing! People experiencing Chronic Fatigue Syndrome may not have any pain whatsoever. In addition, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome could be caused by thyroid problems, medications (like blood pressure prescriptions), or sleep apnea to name just a few possible culprits.

As I indicated above, Fibromyalgia has no primary way of being diagnosed, but we often use lab work to rule out other causes of the patient's condition so that we can be absolutely certain there is not another secondary cause of the pain. Prior to coming to our office, the person may have been seeing a series of doctors for the various symptoms, (Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Pain Management, Depression, and Sleep Apnea, etc.), but when these signs are combined they may point to Fibromyalgia.

My work with patients who have Fibromyalgia has been very gratifying because I see their lives turn around for the better. People who have been reclusive, withdrawn from their family and friends, who haven't been able to do the most common of daily routines like driving, grocery shopping, or interacting with the outside world – after therapy – become a part of society again, and have a new lease on life with a more positive attitude. One woman said, through her tears, “For someone to finally believe me when I say I have a problem, and that I'm not crazy, gives me hope for the future.”

While the symptoms of Fibromyalgia may never totally go away, we try to work on the triggers within the patient's environment to relieve some of their anxiety and pain. Within this issue of our newsletter, you're going to learn the basic information relating to Fibromyalgia. When you look at all the data, if you feel you may be a candidate for a consult regarding this “stealth disease”, we'd like to encourage you to call our office so that Fibromyalgia won't be able to steal any more of your life.



## What IS Fibromyalgia?

According to many medical experts, Fibromyalgia is a disorder that causes muscle pain and body stiffness, which may be combined with feeling tired all the time. Another interesting fact is that this condition is most common in women under the age of 50. As indicated in our cover story, Fibromyalgia cannot be diagnosed with a lab test. After taking a thorough lab history, Dr. Crayton will examine your joints and muscles trying to determine tender points that are linked with this health condition. It is not at all unusual for a patient to have between 11 and 18 tender areas within their body.

In addition to the tender points Dr. Crayton will identify, you may have one or more of the following symptoms: (These are just a few of the symptoms. We'll check for other concerns you may have while you are in our office.)

- A burning, or throbbing pain, in many parts of the body, which can vary during the day.
- Stiffness, or aching, all over your body
- Sleep deprivation (insomnia or sleep apnea)
- Constant fatigue, even after a good night's sleep, with a lack of energy
- Tension or migraine headaches
- Bowel issues

Dr. Crayton suggests that you keep a calendar or record of your symptoms, along with the time of day and where you experience the pain. Bring this information, along with any pain medications, or other prescriptions you are taking for the various symptoms, into your first appointment with Dr. Crayton.

## How can I manage this disease?

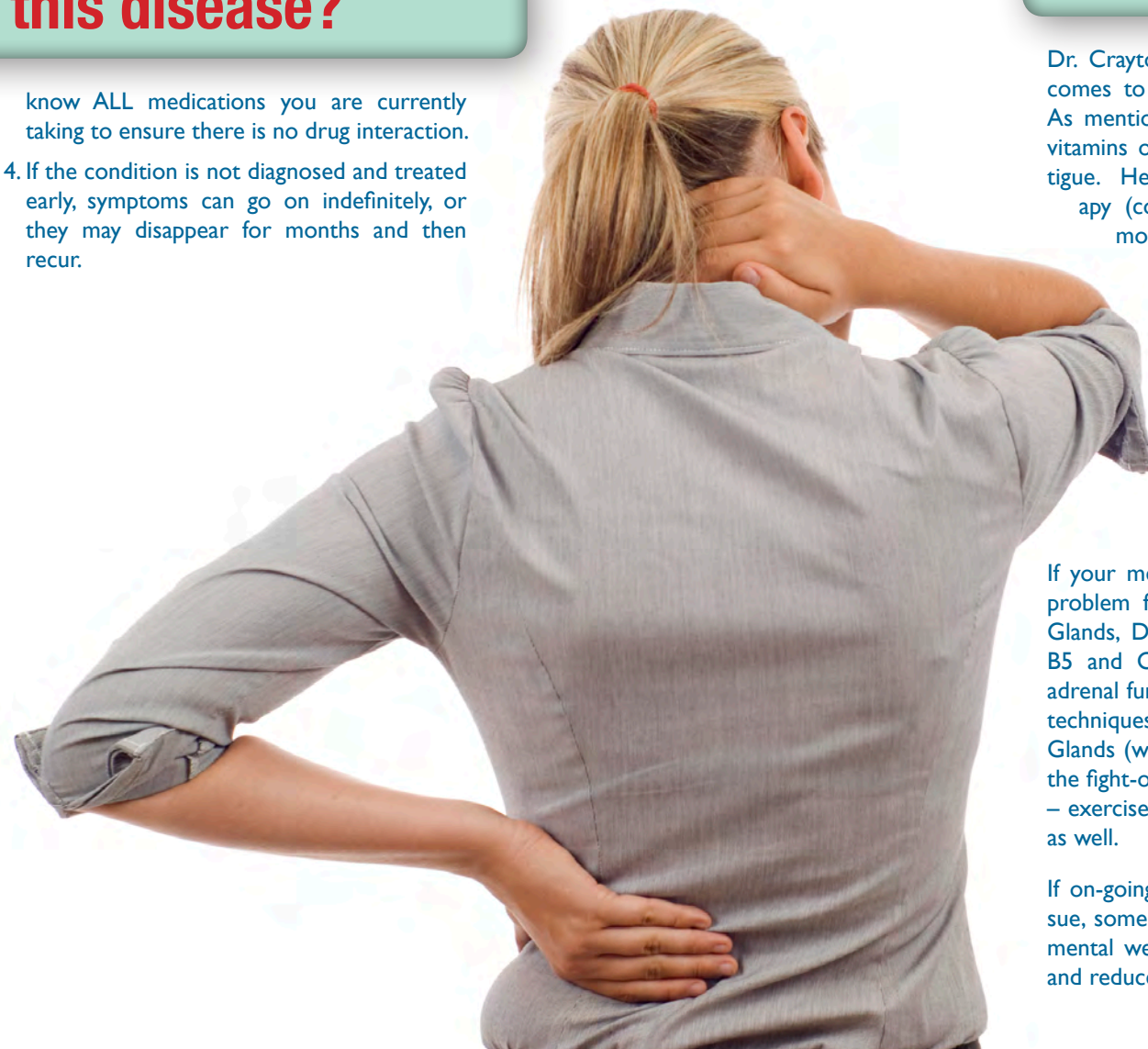
To put your mind at ease, we need for you to understand that although Fibromyalgia is frustrating to the person experiencing the condition – **it is NOT life threatening!** And, before you begin to “manage” the disease, you have to be absolutely certain that Fibromyalgia is your issue, but this health problem can be controlled.

According to The Arthritis Foundation, and as mentioned in the cover article, you need to:

1. **Take the tests** to check your iron levels, vitamin D deficiency, and thyroid problems. That way, Dr. Crayton can get to the root of your condition.
2. **Follow Dr. Crayton's orders!** Depending on your test results, he may suggest anything from getting more exercise and starting certain supplements to using antidepressants as energy boosters. What is most important is to *follow the recommended course of action*, and then communicate with Dr. Crayton if your symptoms worsen or if you have a reaction to any part of the treatment. However, usually once inflammation is under control, fatigue usually diminishes.
3. Dr. Crayton often recommends that patients take over-the-counter pain relievers for pain. However, before he prescribes any medications for Fibromyalgia, he needs to

know ALL medications you are currently taking to ensure there is no drug interaction.

4. If the condition is not diagnosed and treated early, symptoms can go on indefinitely, or they may disappear for months and then recur.



## Fatigue is a real issue! How can I combat it?

**To get the best sleep,** Dr. Crayton may prescribe medications that are NOT habit-forming, but merely improve sleep while reducing pain. Don't watch TV or work in your bedroom. Get up at the same time each day, without napping during the day. Cut down on fluids during the evening, especially those with alcohol and caffeine in them.

**Make exercise a part of your daily life.** Be certain to stretch your muscles. Choose low-impact workouts (biking, swimming, or yoga). Don't push too hard when you are first incorporating exercise into your routine. Be vigilant and don't quit! Exercise is believed to not only help with Fibromyalgia, but it may also extend your life! To help with your fatigue issues, do not exercise for at least three hours before going to bed.

**Eat for Energy!** If you go hungry, you are depleting your body of the “fuel” it needs,

and just like your mother told you, breakfast is the most important meal of the day. In the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, researchers found that breakfast eaters tend to eat healthier meals and fewer calories over the course of the day. Women in the study who ate breakfast weighed less.

**Cut the sugar but Increase the fiber!** Sugar burns off quickly leaving you lethargic, but when you add fiber to your diet (fruits, veggies, and whole grains) the fiber actually helps the body slow the absorption of sugar, which – in turn – levels out your energy highs and lows.

**Stay hydrated** by drinking at least 8 glasses of water per day, but avoid sugary drinks like sodas. Watch out for “energy drinks” that may be high in sugar and caffeine.



## Are there medications I can take?

Dr. Crayton is very conservative when it comes to prescribing medication for pain. As mentioned before, he may recommend vitamins or minerals to help with your fatigue. He may also recommend talk therapy (cognitive-behavioral therapy) or a mood-boosting medication, like a selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitor (SSRI).

If your fatigue is a seasonal affective disorder, Dr. Crayton may suggest light therapy by suggesting that you venture outside for 20 minutes a day – which is a good time to get that exercise we've been suggesting!

If your medical history indicates that your problem fatigue stems from your Adrenal Glands, Dr. Crayton may suggest Vitamins B5 and C, which are known to support adrenal function. However, stress-reduction techniques also help with your Adrenal Glands (which are responsible for secreting the fight-or-flight hormones), but once again – exercise is particularly effective for stress as well.

If on-going, debilitating depression is an issue, some medications may help with your mental well-being as well as improve sleep and reduce pain.

Dr. Crayton and you, the patient, make every decision – together – regarding the best, and most effective, medications for you to take based on your lab results.

### How can I get control of my life back?

To reiterate:

- Learn ways to reduce and manage stress in your life.
- Maintain healthy eating and exercising routines
- Consult with Dr. Crayton regarding ongoing sleep or depression issues.

In addition to those “basics” we've discussed, you may need to get some assistance from either a counselor, or Dr. Crayton, to learn how to:

- Set boundaries with people who cause you a great deal of stress
- Ask for help! Don't be shy in this area. Most people will do absolutely anything you ask them to do, but they cannot read your mind. So be open and honest about what your needs are with family and friends.

- Recently, it has been found (especially in the tropical setting in which we live) that there is *heat sensitivity* with Fibromyalgia. In an article in HealthCentral.com, they suggest wearing soft, lightweight clothing that fits very loosely, sticking to light colors as well, so as not to absorb heat.

- As mentioned before, stay hydrated. You can also take a cool bath or shower, or just soak your feet in cool water (not ice water) to help cool your entire body.

- If you don't have air conditioning, put a bowl of ice in front of a fan to help cool the air. And you can also use an ice bag or cold pack to get relief from the heat. If you are in an office, invest in a hand-held, battery operated fan.

