

Fibromyalgia: Alleviating Its Depression, Sleep Disorders and Overeating.

By: Dr. William Wong, ND, PhD.

Fibromyalgia is a physiological and not a psychological disease; but in time deep psychological symptoms do develop. Not being able to work. Not having the energy to care for family and home. The unrelenting pain coupled with the disbelief of doctors' family and friends, all these things combine to create a seeming psychological disease. Depression sets in as inability and inactivity become the daily routine. Daily worry and depression combine with pain, spasm and stiffness to upset the sleep pattern and create sleeping disorders. The brain chemistry itself becomes off balanced and with that the patient seems of become mentally off balanced.

For those who have been on the usual round of pain killing and anti depression medication and have experienced no change or relief, always to the disbelief of the medical community; I offer this hope for feeling better, sleeping better, and improving ones outlook - the amino acid L Tryptophan.

"Tryptophan you say! That was banned in years ago - wasn't it"? Well yes and no.

First lets go over what L Tryptophan does. Tryptophen is an essential amino acid, a building block of protein our bodies cannot do with out. When tryptophan is missing from our diets we die, and die badly. Tryptophan is the only thing that can create serotonin, the brain chemical that produces sleep and fights depression.

Anti depression drugs don't produce serotonin, they merely recycle it. You can only recycle something so many times before it goes bad! If you took a piece of nice clean paper and put it through a copy machine over and over and over and over again, in time that piece of once clean smooth paper would be crumpled, dirty and not fulfilling it's function. So it is with recycled brain chemicals. Nature depends on replenishing these chemicals not recycling them. That's why the side effects of the anti depression drugs are so severe and include: suicide, murder and mania (violent uncontrolled behavior). The two doctors who developed Prozac were sent to federal prison for falsifying its test data. Prozac's manufacturers know that 10% of patients who take the drug will have episodes of mania. With only one exception all of the school killings from 1993, when they started prescribing antidepressants for children, until now have involved Ritalin, antidepressants or both! Yet there is so much money involved with selling the #1 selling drug in the world that you've likely never heard of those facts until today!

Many folks due to poor food choices, a low protein diet, intestinal malabsorbtion, poor circulation or other factors don't get enough tryptophan from their eating to adequately feed their brains. Most of us know the familiar feeling of being cozy and sleepy after Thanksgiving supper; that's from the tryptophan producing serotonin in your brain.

Depression and insomnia patients can eat the whole turkey and a gallon of warm milk to boot and not get that lazy warm sleepy feeling that other folks do!

In the late 1980's the main tryptophan producer in the world, Showa Denko of Japan, accidentally on purpose dumped a tainted batch of tryptophan on the US market. The contaminated batch contained 30 to 60 different bacteria and many folks who were taking doses of 5000 mg. a day or more of the tainted product got sick, some even died of the bacteria. The FDA banned and confiscated the Showa Denko product from the market. Then in a surprise move the FDA announced an import restriction on all tryptophan except for pharmaceutical grade tryptophan meant for baby formulas, senior IV feeding, animal use and when prescribed by doctors for human use. So in other words tryptophan was still legal to buy but it was almost impossible to get into the country! Up to that time the US tryptophan market had totaled some \$60,000,000. It was just a few weeks after the import restrictions when the depression patients, orthomolecular psychiatric patients, and chronic insomniacs began really missing their tryptophan that Prozac was introduced with many flourishes and highly paid for publicity. Coincidence, I think not!

Getting back to Fibromyalgia; what can tryptophan do to help? In peer reviewed scientific studies it had been repeatedly proven that tryptophan:

1. Reduces or eliminates depression. (1).
2. Relieves insomnia. (2).
3. Reduces the tendency to overeat. (3).
4. Reduces pain. (4)
5. Reduces the impulse to commit suicide. (5)
6. Reduces the tendency towards angry or violent outbursts. (6).

These days to get around the supposed "ban" on tryptophen an analogue of it called 5-HTP is being widely used. While it has some of the serotonin producing properties of full l tryptophen, the 5 HTP lacks many of l tryptophens' beneficial actions such as pain control and muscular relaxation. These additional actions are important in reducing many of the complaints Fibromyalgia patients have.

As a patient deals with the myriad of concerns that Fibromyalgia produces, tryptophan can clear and calm the mind and also, allow for a longer more restful period of sleep at night! Tryptophen helps to control muscle stiffness and spasm, the twitches that tend to wake a patient up at night are greatly reduced! When used in lower doses during the day, tryptophen can smooth out the rough spots, lower tempers and frustration providing for a better sense of well being.

It's been said that eating is the last pleasure. Fibromyalgia patients not finding relief from medication or support from family and friends tend to over eat "comfort foods" which are high in carbohydrates and therefore fattening. Combine the over "carb-ing" with the sedentary nature of Fibromyalgia and one has the recipe for obesity. Raising serotonin levels and increasing delivery of blood sugar to the brain increases the sense of comfort and well being and decreases the appetite. Both of those effects are done by tryptophen!

Fibromyalgia patients have enough to feel badly about without adding being overweight to the list!

Pure pharmaceutical grade tryptophan has no side effects. Remember it is essential to brain function and to life.

Pharmaceutical grade tryptophen (the purest form) is currently available for both veterinary and human use. The products are identical, except for the label. Veterinary products actually have higher standards of purity than pharmaceutical products made for humans! The liability issues are higher if an animal dies than if a person does. It sounds crazy but that's how the insurance companies have worked it. For example: with aspirin and ibuprofen, 20,000 Americans die each year! Have you heard of anyone suing Bayer or Motrin for the death of a loved one? No. Yet if a product kills someone's prized Arabian horse or favorite pet poodle the owner of that animal may likely wind up owning the supplement company as well!

Dosage? Usually one 500 mg. capsule for each 50 pounds of your bodyweight when taken before bed. You can freely experiment in taking less than that amount and work your way up to the full dose if needed. During the day you may try one or two capsules in-between meals to maintain a higher production of serotonin during your waking hours.

If used by itself tryptophan will provide you with all of the benefits a higher level of serotonin brings. When added to a comprehensive program to overcome Fibromyalgia, such as is detailed in my book "10 Natural Treatments you Haven't Heard of Until Now", the road to wellness, and to a fuller more pain free life will be much much smoother.

References:

- 1.Farkas, T.,Dunner, D.,I. And Fieve, R.,R.,L.: L - Tryptophan in depression. Biol. Psych., 11(3), 1976.
- 2.Hartmann, E., Spinweber,C., L: Sleep induced by L-Tryptophan: effect of dosages within the normal dietary intake. J. Nervous and Mental Disease, 167(8),1979.
- 3.Wurtman, R., J., et al: Composition and method for suppressing appetite for calories as carbohydrates. United States Patent, 4,210,637. July 1, 1980.
- 4.Liberman, J., et al; Mood, performance and pain sensitivity: changes induced by food constituents. J. Psychiat. Res., 17(2): 135-145, 1982-83.
- 5.Braverman, E.,R., Pfeiffer, C., C. : Suicide and biochemistry. Biol. Psych., 20: 123-124, 1985.
- 6.Mawson, A., R. : Corn, tryptophen and homicide. J. Ortho. Psych., 7(4): 227-230, 1978.