



Healthy for Life Newsletter

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In this issue of the Healthy for Life Newsletter, I will discuss my approach to my fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue patients and will include specific, practical recommendations which have been effective.

Nutritional Supplementation—Cellular Nutrition

The most important step for fibromyalgia patients to regain their health is an aggressive nutritional supplementation program. I place all of my fibromyalgia patients on what I refer to as *cellular nutrition*. Cellular nutrition is defined as providing all the essential nutrients to the body at those optimal levels that medical literature has established as beneficial. Within 6 months any nutritional deficiencies should be corrected, and all the nutrients should be brought to optimal levels. This not only creates the synergy that we discussed in our last newsletter, but it also optimizes your body's natural immune system, antioxidant defense system, and repair system.

In my last newsletter, I explained my belief that the underlying cause of fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue is oxidative stress. Remember, to correct oxidative stress, you must have enough antioxidants available to manage the number of free radicals produced. One of the best ways to begin accomplishing this goal is to try what I have referred to as [cellular nutrition](#) (click on this link to see what I consider to be cellular nutrition) by taking high-quality, complete and balanced nutritional supplements. You will not get what I recommend from a one-a-day vitamin. To get the optimal levels, you will usually need to take a total of 3 or 4 antioxidant tablets and 3 or 4 mineral tablets spread throughout the day and taken with

your meals. It is critical that your nutritional supplements are manufactured by a company that follows USP guidelines and pharmaceutical-grade Good Manufacturing Practices.

My patients with fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue have much more oxidative stress than the normal person. To bring this oxidative stress under control, my patients need to add what I refer to as “enhancers” to their cellular nutrition.

Enhancers

Grape Seed Extract

Enhancers are added to this cellular nutrition to create more effective synergy and allow an even better chance of controlling oxidative stress. The first enhancer I always recommend to my fibromyalgia patients is grape seed extract. This is probably the most potent antioxidant available today. It is 50 times more potent than vitamin E and 20 times more potent than vitamin C when taken with cellular nutrition. If it is just taken by itself, it is only 7 or 8 times more potent than vitamin E and 3 to 4 times more potent than vitamin C. This positive difference is because of the synergistic effect of using grape seed extract with all of these supporting nutrients.

Grape seed extract is not only a great antioxidant, but also it is a great anti-inflammatory and anti-allergen. Most of my patients with fibromyalgia suffer from allergies and too much inflammation in their bodies. Grape seed extract also readily crosses the blood-brain barrier in the brain. This is important because one of the major problems these patients report is what I refer to as a “mental foginess.”

I initially start my patients on 300 mg to even 400 mg of grape seed extract daily. I previously recommended only 100 mg daily; however, I found over time that only about 20 to 25% had a positive response. When my patients started with the higher doses of grape seed extract, I found that nearly 70% of my fibromyalgia patients had a positive response after they had been on this aggressive nutritional support for over 6 months.

Coenzyme Q10

Coenzyme Q10 is one of the most important nutrients that is required for the cell to create energy. Since a major aspect of fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue is fatigue, I have found that supplementing with this important nutrient gives my patients a much better chance for a positive response. CoQ10 is also one of the most potent boosters for our immune system. Most of my patients with fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue have a depleted immune system, and I recommend that they supplement their diet with 200 mg of powder form CoQ10 or 60 mg of gel form. The gel form of CoQ10 is absorbed about three to three and one-half times greater than the powder form. Again, it takes a minimum of 6 months to restore the body's natural immune system and to achieve the optimal levels of CoQ10.

Calcium/Magnesium/Vitamin D

Fibromyalgia patients suffer from tight muscle bands throughout their body, but especially in their neck and shoulders. These taut muscles can be partly the result of a magnesium deficiency. By supplementing their diet with additional calcium and magnesium along with higher doses of vitamin D, patients can experience significant improvement. This is why I always recommend that my fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue patients also take an additional 600 to 800 mg of calcium, 500 to 600 mg of magnesium, and 400 IU of vitamin D. This is in addition to the amount they receive with their cellular nutrition.

Essential Fatty Acids

I always want my patients with fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue to also take either a filtered fish oil capsule or cold-pressed flax seed oil to get the additional essential fatty acids our bodies so desperately need. I prefer the filtered fish oil capsule. These essential fatty acids or omega-3 fatty acids quickly produce our body's own natural anti-inflammatories and can give fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue patients some significant improvements.

A 6-Month Trial Is Critical

When I first began working nutritionally with my fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue patients, many would try my recommendations for only a month or two. During the next office visit, they would tell me that they did not note any improvement and that they had quit taking them. I quickly learned that I did not want my patients to even begin with my recommendations unless they were committed to trying them for a minimum of 6 months.

Nutritional medicine is much different than traditional Western medicine which relies on drug therapy. It takes a minimum of 6 months to replenish a nutritional deficiency and restore all the other nutrients to their optimal levels.. This is also the length of time needed to optimize the body's natural defense system. Since there is only symptomatic treatment available for fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue in traditional medicine, I felt sorry for my patients who did not give this aggressive nutritional approach adequate time. When they would try this for only a month or two and then quit, they all felt that it just didn't work for them. They needed to try this nutritional approach longer to know if they would be in the 70% category that had experienced a positive response. Now if my patients tell me that they would be willing to try this approach for only a month or two, I tell them not to start at all. They should wait until they are willing to try it for at least 6 months.

Eating a Healthy Diet

Most of my patients with fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue are very sensitive to sugar. It may be because they feel so miserable all the time that when they spike their blood sugar, they at least feel better for a short time. Many of these patients are also not able to exercise normally. Combining decreased activity with a poor diet often causes a weight problem. This is why I encourage all my patients with fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue to eat a healthy diet containing good fats and good proteins and to avoid foods which spike their blood sugar levels.

I have detailed this healthy diet in my book, Healthy for Life, which is available in bookstores or on my website. You may also want to consider joining my Healthy for Life Program located at www.releasingfat.com. My fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue patients have increased improvement if they follow my recommended aggressive nutritional supplement program and healthy diet plan.

Exercise Is Critical

While exercise is critical, it is also potentially dangerous for the patient with fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue. Any exercise, especially aerobic exercise, can make fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue symptoms flare. If you overdo your exercise, you may be in bed for the next two weeks. This is why I recommend that my patients exercise only every other day. Start very slowly, and never exercise two days in a row. For some of you this may mean walking for only 5 minutes every other day. After a couple of weeks with no setback, you may try to increase walking for 10 minutes every other day. Some of my patients are able to increase their walking time to 30 minutes every other day, and some eventually are able to work out two days in a row. However, this only occurs over months of gradual increase.

Since exercise can potentially cause a crash, why do I recommend it? I have found that my fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue patients who exercise

carefully always do better than my patients who do not exercise. If it is done carefully and increased slowly, it is always a very positive aspect to their care.

Weight resistant training, practicing yoga, or stretching seem to be tolerated better than aerobic activity. These forms of exercise can always be slowly added to a very modest and careful aerobic activity, but I still like the aerobic activity to be the basis of an exercise program.

What Can I Expect if I Commit to These Recommendations?

What I have learned over the past 12 years in treating patients with fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue is that improvements come slowly. The average length of time is eight years before a patient with fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue actually receives a diagnosis. In other words, these patients suffer for years before their doctors make this diagnosis. Many of these patients are very frustrated with the medical establishment because they have often been told that nothing is wrong with them and that it is most likely just “in their heads.” Even if the diagnosis is made, they are usually just given a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory, muscle relaxant, along with anti-depressant and told to find a support group and learn to live with it. Let’s make no mistake about fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue; it is a very serious and difficult disease. It is a life-long disease, and many of these patients also develop diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, or some other autoimmune disease. Therefore, it is certainly worth a short 6 to 9 month trial to get your life back.

First and foremost, you must NOT discontinue any medication that you are presently taking. You should only decrease or discontinue your medication under your doctor’s direction and orders. Obviously, if you begin to have clinical improvements, you will need your medication less and less. However, any changes in medication must be directed by your physician.

Most of my fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue patients will begin to note some minor improvements during the first couple of months. The most common improvement they report is clearer thinking and less “mental foginess.” Next, they often report an increased energy level. They may also note that their sleep pattern has actually started to improve, and sometimes they tell me that they are dreaming again for the first time in years. The last improvement for my fibromyalgia patients is a decrease in their pain level. Many times it takes at least 6 months for them to note this change.

Initially, many of my patients with fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue rate their energy level somewhere between 40 to 60% of normal. Those patients who improve rate their energy level at 80 to 100%. This improvement seems to continue over several years on the program. In other words, the longer they stay with the program, the better they are year after year.

There is one very important warning. Almost all of my fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue patients who have a positive response to these recommendations will sooner or later have a setback, and their symptoms will worsen again. Remember, their underlying disease is never cured. When this happens, my patients become very concerned, if not outright frightened, because they worry that they will be as ill as they once were. This is a natural fear; however, I usually just recommend that my patients get some additional rest and increase their grape seed extract by one or two additional tablets. They will normally return to the level of previous improvement and again can just take their regular amount of grape seed extract. Some of my patients have actually learned that if they anticipate additional stress or if they suffer an illness or injury, they can increase the dose of grape seed extract to prevent a setback. Then they return to their previous dose when their stress level is back to normal or when they have totally recovered from an illness or injury.

Not everyone improves. However, nearly 70% of my patients will note significant positive

improvement if they stay with these recommendations for a minimum of 6 months. One of the main reasons people do not improve is because they do not choose the highest quality nutritional supplement that is available. Since nutritional supplement companies are basically unregulated, it is critical to choose a company that produces a high-quality, complete and balanced product. I would strongly encourage you to consider becoming a member of my online medical practice at www.bionutrition.org and to arrange a personal consult for advice on what specific products I recommend to my patients. Others may already know a member of my website who can arrange a personal consult. Either way, I believe it is certainly worth the time, money, and effort to give yourself an opportunity to regain your health.