



Fibromyalgia

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Fibromyalgia
CAM Treatment

Accurate Education

Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)

Nutraceuticals for Fibromyalgia - Brain Fog

Those with fibromyalgia know that pain is only part of the story. Many people with fibromyalgia struggle with:

1. **Fatigue and exhaustion** that doesn't improve with rest
2. **Fibro fog"** (Cognitive impairment: problems with memory, concentration, and clear thinking)
3. **Sleep problems** difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep and waking up feeling unrefreshed
4. **Mood changes** including depression and anxiety

These symptoms can be just as disabling as pain, affecting one's work, relationships, and daily activities. There are certain natural, nutraceutical supplements and dietary changes that may help improve these symptoms.

Nutraceuticals are natural compounds found in foods or as supplements that may help manage medical conditions. This guide focuses on evidence-based nutraceuticals that may help with some of the "Fibro Fog," cognitive impairment symptoms of fibromyalgia.

Nutraceuticals for Cognitive Impairment ("Fibro Fog")

1. Probiotics (the most promising)

What they are: Beneficial bacteria that support gut health (microbiome) and may influence brain function through the "gut-brain axis."

How they help: Probiotics may reduce inflammation in the brain and improve cognitive function, including attention and decision-making. They also help with symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Recommended approach: Look for multi-strain probiotic formulations. The specific strains used in fibromyalgia studies varies and no definitive supplement recommendations are available. Emphasizing dietary approaches appear to be the best option. Foods with probiotics include yogurt and other culture dairy products and fermented foods including cabbage and kimchi chee.

What the research shows: Small studies found that probiotics improved attention and reduced impulsivity in fibromyalgia patients after 8 weeks of probiotics use.

Safety: Very safe. May cause mild gas or bloating initially.

Best used: Especially helpful in those who also have digestive symptoms or mood problems.

2. Acetyl-L-Carnitine (ALC) (good evidence for fatigue and brain fog)

What it is: A natural compound that helps your body produce energy and supports brain function.

How it helps: Improves energy production in cells, protects nerves and reduce fatigue. In addition, ALC also supports brain function and may improve mental clarity, focus, and memory.

Recommended dose: 500 mg twice daily (1,000 mg) or 500 mg three times daily (1,500 mg)

When to expect results: Benefits typically appear within 4-12 weeks.

Safety: Well-tolerated with few side effects. Rarely causes mild nausea or digestive changes.

Best used: Especially helpful if one has both fatigue and cognitive problems ("fibro fog").

3. Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) (strongest evidence for fatigue)

What it is: A natural compound in our body that helps cells produce energy. Many people with fibromyalgia have low CoQ10 levels.

How it helps: CoQ10 improves how your mitochondria (the "power plants" of your cells) work, reduces inflammation, and acts as an antioxidant. It can significantly reduce fatigue in fibromyalgia. Animal studies suggest CoQ10 may improve learning and memory by supporting brain cell function and reducing oxidative stress. Human evidence for cognitive benefits in fibromyalgia is limited but promising.

Recommended dose: 200-300 mg /day. Ubiquinol or special formulations) for better absorption.

When to expect results: Most people notice improvements in fatigue within 40 days to 3 months

What the research shows: In one study, fibromyalgia patients taking 200 mg of CoQ10 twice daily experienced a 22% reduction in fatigue and 33% improvement in sleep disturbance. Another study using 300 mg daily showed significant improvements in pain, fatigue, and morning tiredness.

Safety: Very safe with minimal side effects, rare mild digestive upset.

Best used: CoQ10 may also help with pain, and it addresses multiple symptoms at once.

4. Correct Vitamin and Mineral Deficiencies

Vitamins and Minerals play important roles in brain function. Correcting deficiencies may help improve cognitive symptoms.

B vitamins

What they are: A group of vitamins (B1, B2, B3, B5, B6/thiamine, B9/folic acid, B12) essential for energy production and nerve function.

How they help: B vitamins are needed for your body to convert food into energy and for proper nerve function. Supplementing vitamin B12 combined with oral folic acid may help reduce fatigue

Recommended approach: Monitor B9 (folic acid) and B12 levels.

Safety: B vitamins are generally very safe. High doses of B6 can rarely cause nerve problems,

Vitamin D

What it is: A vitamin where deficiency is common, especially in fibromyalgia

How it helps: Vitamin D plays important roles in muscle function, immune health, and mood. Vitamin D deficiency may worsen fatigue and pain.

Typical dose: Based on blood levels

Safety: Safe when taken at recommended doses but very high doses can cause problems

Iron (important if deficient)

What it is: An essential mineral needed for oxygen transport and energy production.

How it helps: Iron deficiency (even without anemia) can cause severe fatigue. Studies show that people with iron deficiency anemia have a higher risk of developing fibromyalgia, and iron supplementation can reduce this risk and improve symptoms.

Recommended approach: Monitor iron levels (including ferritin, which measures iron stores). If ferritin is below 60 mcg/dL, one may benefit from iron supplementation.

Safety: Oral iron can cause constipation and stomach upset. Start with a low dose with food.

Important: Only take iron if when deficient. Too much iron can be harmful.