

FIBRO NEWS



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North Somerset Fibromyalgia Support Group

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Chairman

Mrs Betty Farron

Newsletter Co-ordinator

Mrs Averil McManus

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2008 DIARY DATES

Date	Topic	Speaker
February 27th	Craft Session	Julia Mc Cougaig
March 26th	SS Great Britain	Christopher Young
April 30th	A G M	All of us

Meetings are held the last Wednesday of each month

10.30 – 12.30 at the Folk Hall, Portishead

£1.50 per session

Group Charges

Group membership is £10 per annum. Each member receives a monthly newsletter by post. When attending meetings a fee of £1.50 is made to cover refreshments, a raffle and hall hire. Books can be borrowed for a returnable deposit of £1.

Happy Birthday

to all of you, who are celebrating this month

January meeting

There were 26 people present at the January meeting and Betty gave apologies from Nuala.

Betty reported that an article in the **New York Times** on the 14th January entitled: DRUG APPROVAL. IS DISEASE REAL? has caused furore. The article reported that a new drug called LYRICA (known generically as Pregablin) and produced by the pharmaceutical company Pfizer was now on the market. This is the first drug to be marketed specifically as a treatment for Fibromyalgia and is welcomed by patient advocacy groups and doctors who specialise in fibromyalgia However other doctors, including Dr. Frederick Wolfe one of the team who defined the diagnostic guidelines for fibromyalgia in 1990, now declares that the disease does not exist, and that Lyrica and other drugs will be taken by millions of people who do not need them! "Despite all this controversy The American College of Rheumatology, the Food and Drug Administration and insurers recognise fibromyalgia as a diagnosable disease and drug companies are aggressively pursuing fibromyalgia treatments, seeing the potential for a major new market. In fact two more drugs are due to be approved for fibromyalgia later this year."..."Lyrica works by binding to receptors in the brain and spinal cord and seems to reduce activity in the central nervous system".

Lyrica can cause weight gain and this is seen as a special concern "because it is recognised that many fibromyalgia patients are already overweight: the average fibromyalgia patient in the 2007 survey reported weighing 180 pounds and standing 5 feet 4 inches". Other side effects are oedema or swelling, as well as dizziness and sleepiness.

A few of our members said they were pleased that the New York Times article had highlighted Fibromyalgia and sparked off all this debate in the public arena.

FMA UK wrote a robust reply to the New York Times and both article and letter can be found on the FMAUK website.

Fundraising for FMAUK

Betty also reminded us at the meeting that she is a FMA UK trustee and her particular responsibility is fundraising. She asked for our ideas on methods of fundraising. I know we all value the huge amount time and effort Betty expends on our behalf but perhaps this is an area in which we can offer practical support. If you would like to be involved in a brainstorming session please let Betty know at the February meeting and we can set a date for that. Bring your diaries with you!

FEBRUARY CRAFT MEETING - painted/decoupage flowerpots

This months meeting will involve getting creative with pots!

We'll be using several techniques and you may find it easier to bring some of your own equipment. An apron, newspaper, paintbrushes - small to 1 inch approx, small pots/tubes of emulsion or acrylic paint if you have them, PVA glue, small and large scissors, silver/gold/any favourite colour felt or gel pens, photocopies/pictures/wrapping paper to use as decoupage on the pots (think of a theme and colour scheme you like) and a small terracotta pot if you have one. I have a few papers and paints and have purchased some pots so if you don't have one, then you can buy one of these at 49p.

I'm really looking forward to having some crafting fun with you all again, don't be late!!!! **Julia.**



Top 10 Anti-Ageing Foods cont'd

So far we have looked at Blueberries, Water, and Prunes and next up is Salmon!
Salmon meat contains:

- * DMAE, an antioxidant that stimulates nerve function and encourages the muscles under the skin to contract and tighten - an alternate to a face lift!
- * Salmon is an important source of essential Omega-3 fatty acids which can give you a mental boost, help you think more clearly and help you feel good about yourself. It can also help combat dryness in the skin.
- * Salmon, like other oily fish, contains copper which helps produce melanin that protects our skin against the sun, and zinc which helps keep our collagen supply at maximum, reducing the effect of wrinkles and sun damage on our skin. It also improves the condition of our hair by strengthening the roots and encouraging natural oil production.
- * Salmon also contains protein. Healthy skin needs protein to keep producing healthy cells. It's also a great source of A, C and E vitamins and minerals (selenium, copper, zinc).
- * If you don't like salmon you could try : herrings, anchovies, mackerel, trout, or sardines.



Did you know?

75% of Britain's don't eat oily fish, yet we should be eating 2-4 portions a week. Time to rethink? You'll boost your brain power and protect your heart at the same time.

(excerpts taken from The Nutrition Bible by Nicky Hambleton-Jones)

International Awareness Day - 12 May 2008 Houses of Parliament

We will be manning a stall at the Mall on the **15th May** as an awareness event and so far we 7 names on the list to cover that. It will be a most rewarding day and a chance for some members to get to know one another better and have some fun doing something very worthwhile. Please consider if you can give an hour or two to this. I was once a member of the general public out there, walking around the mall, struggling with failing health and an undiagnosed illness. I wish I had come upon a group of people drawing attention to all my troubling symptoms 20 years ago! I wonder what difference that would have made to my life! Please sign up with Betty.

Perhaps you and a particular fibro friend could share transport to the mall and do a shift together. You will not be left on the stall by yourself!

FMA UK are working to raise awareness of the condition and are having a stand at the **British Society for Rheumatology** conference in Liverpool in April. Betty and Norman are going to help man this stand. Betty is seeking ammunition (information and evidence) and invites comments from all of us who have fibromyalgia to help her draw up a précis on what it feels like to have FM and how others treat us including friends and medical professionals - i.e. a patient's perspective. Needless to say everything will be totally anonymous.

Disclaimer The Group does not recommend/endorse any specific treatment or medication. It is the individual's responsibility to consult a medical professional.



ALOE VERA - "MIRACLE PLANT"

Helen Davies, a distributor for Forever Living Products, came to speak to us about the amazing healing properties of Aloe Vera and to introduce us in particular to two products, Aloe Vera Gel and Forever Freedom, both sold as drinks.

Aloe Vera has been around for over two millennia and is known world wide by the nicknames: Medicine Plant, Miracle Plant, Silent Healer, Wand of Heaven, and Burn Plant.

Helen played us a DVD of a talk by a Dr. Peter Allerton, an independent expert who became interested in the healing properties of Aloe Vera when a patient of his had remarkable success when using Aloe Vera to clear up eczema which had resisted all other treatments. Dr Allerton now lectures extensively on medical aspects of Aloe Vera and is the author of three books on the subject ...his latest entitled Aloe Vera the Medicine Plant is on the way to being an international best seller. He was not speaking as an endorser of Forever living Products but of course the FLP company believe that they more than meet his criteria for a quality product and therefore use him to advertise the health benefits of using Aloe Vera. Helen also brought with her some articles off the company website written by people with Fibromyalgia who had greatly benefited by using FL products.

Dr Allerton says that an effective product must have been manufactured and stabilised in such a way that it has not undergone excessive heating, filtration or concentration. He suggests finding a product containing a cold stabilised gel, unfiltered and unconcentrated. Forever Living Products believe that their product is the "Rolls Royce" of Aloe Vera Products. Only four or five out of the 200 species of Aloe Vera have medicinal properties and Aloe Barbensis Miller (also known as Aloe Linnes and Aloe Vulgarius) is the most potent and the only one entitled to be known as Aloe Vera or the true Aloe. It is the inner gel that is used to produce FL products.

The gel can be taken internally for its nutritional anti-inflammatory and immune balancing effect. The gel is also combined with other ingredients to produce creams and lotions to nourish and heal damaged skin. Dr. Allerton, in his booklet "Understanding Aloe Vera" says that cases of eczema, dermatitis, psoriasis, acne and rosacea respond well and that even chronic ulcers and bed sores, if treated with persistence, can improve greatly. When ingested Aloe Vera's anti-inflammatory action goes to work on conditions such as Rheumatoid Arthritis and Lupus, Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's disease. It is also claimed to help in IBS, as it regulates movement in the bowel making it contract and relax in rhythmical fashion and if the problem is constipation can have a laxative effect, or in the case of a loose bowel can make bowel movements firm! Aloe Vera regulates gut flora and works as a natural detox.

As mentioned earlier Helen introduced two gel drinks. The first one to receive certification by the International Aloe Science Council is Aloe Vera Gel claimed "to be so pure it is marketed as being "essentially identical" to the fresh gel of the leaf.

(To be marketed as "gel" the product must contain at least 85% certified Aloe Vera.) It contains an abundance of vitamins and minerals, including the rare vitamin B12 - one of only two vegetable sources available". Present also are the antioxidant vitamins C and E and Beta-Carotene the precursor of Vitamin A. The human body requires 20 amino acids and Aloe Vera contains 19 of them. (Seven essential amino acids which are directly linked to cell growth, and which cannot be manufactured within the body from other sources and which therefore have to be consumed as food are present.)

The minerals include magnesium, manganese, zinc, copper, chromium, calcium, sodium, potassium and iron.

Sugars present include the important long chain polysaccharides which act on the immune system to boost its effects.

Enzymes: lipases and proteases which break down food and aid digestion.

Plant sterols: the three main types act as powerful anti inflammatory agents.

Saponins: these are soapy substances that exert a powerful anti-microbial effect against bacteria, viruses, fungi and yeasts such as Candida or "thrush".

Lignan, a woody substance which bestows on Aloe Vera its penetrative ability to reach deep within the skin.

Anthraquinones: the most important ones being aloin and emodin, but together they are strong painkillers, and are acknowledged to possess anti-bacterial and virucidal activity. In their pure form they are very powerful laxatives.

Salicylic Acid: this aspirin-like compound is anti-inflammatory when taken orally and used topically it helps to break down dead tissue.

The product called Forever Freedom has the added benefits of glucosamine sulphate (1500 mg), chondroitin sulphate 1200 mg, and methylsulphonylmethane (MSM 750 mg) per 4 oz serving. The former two ingredients are two naturally occurring substances found in cartilage but as the body ages it is less able to produce these natural elements of healthy cartilage which then tends to lead to the wear and tear type of arthritis.

MSM has a strong anti-inflammatory effect. You could try Forever Freedom instead of Ibuprofen.

We thank Helen most warmly for coming along to talk to us. If you are interested in contacting Helen for further information or to buy some product she can be contacted on **01275 342239**.

You can also email her hadavis@blueyonder.co.uk

(I apologise for the length of the above article but I felt it was necessary to give as full a report as possible. We all know that there is no magic cure for Fibromyalgia. Please consult your GP if you want to try individual products.

Write-ups about health products in our newsletter is for information purposes only) Comments are welcome.

BRITISH SETTLEMENTS

Just for fun - can you guess the answers to the cryptic clues?

1. A modern fortress
2. Famous for his 'Blue Boy'
3. Witches score at rugby.....
4. Spoil an entrance.....
5. Secure firmly.....
6. Need them for dog walking.....
7. Ships company.....
8. Mum's now recovered.....
9. A careless driver does this to cars.....
10. Surrounds a factory.....
11. The body of a ship.....
12. Bill's castle.....
13. Literary pastime.....
14. Communist transport.....
15. Protection for sea creatures.....
16. Applaud them.....
17. A bank robber says this.....
18. Novel way to open a locked door.....
19. Peoples rock.....
20. Skull in a rabbit hole.....