

# PainNews

SPRING 2016

News from **The Pain Center of Arizona**

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Types of Triggers for

## FIBROMYALGIA PAIN

caffeine | food | sleep | & more

Coping with  
Spring Allergies  
& *Chronic Pain*

QA  
AND  
QA

with  
Dr. Sachin Narain

**TPC**  
The Pain Center  
OF ARIZONA



Types of Triggers for

# FIBROMYALGIA PAIN

**F**ibromyalgia is associated with pain all over the body. This pain often is an aching pain, and is accompanied with other symptoms, like brain fog. At this point, there is no known cure for fibromyalgia, but there are lifestyle changes that, with the help of treatment from The Pain Center, can help ease pain.

Even though fibromyalgia patients feel pain most of the time, there are certain habits or events that make pain flare up and worsen and are known as pain triggers. At The Pain Center of Arizona, we classify pain triggers into these categories: food, sleep, and stress.

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**Food triggers are the most common, and studies have shown that certain foods aggravate fibromyalgia.**

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Typically, it's heavily processed foods that bring out the biggest symptom flare-ups. Our physicians recommend considering cutting out foods containing MSG, artificial sweeteners, and caffeine. Instead, sticking to fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins could prevent food pain triggers.

Another pain trigger fibromyalgia patients have to deal with is

caused by sleep. They often have difficulty falling asleep due to the pain, or will wake up frequently because of their pain. This feeling of fatigue puts patients in what's known as a "fibro fog" because the lack of sleep makes it difficult to concentrate. Sometimes, patients might drink coffee to make them feel more awake. However, because caffeine is a known trigger, it can make it hard for fibromyalgia patients to fall asleep again and may lead to higher levels of pain. Our physicians recommend trying to stick to a normal sleep schedule and using relaxation techniques like massage or aromatherapy to help patients fall asleep.

It's easy to be stressed with fibromyalgia. Patients are sometimes tense all day because of their pain, and not being able to relax is a serious pain trigger. Since stress is such a prolonged feeling, some patients report stress triggers induce pain flare ups for longer periods of time. Our team suggests doing activities that patients love in addition to following their treatment plan for both mental and physical treatment of pain.

These are all common pain triggers to patients, but there are countless other triggers a patient could experience. For example, an Arizona patient may get a flare up when they travel to a humid state. Tell your physician about what makes your pain worse so he or she can create the best treatment plan for you.

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**To make an appointment to discuss treatment options for fibromyalgia pain, call us today at 1-888-PAINCENTER.**

# QA

AND



## Dr. Sachin Narain | Gilbert Clinic

Radiofrequency ablation (RFA) is a minimally invasive treatment that provides relief to those with chronic neck and back pain.

In this article, Dr. Sachin Narain of The Pain Center of Arizona explains what patients can expect from this procedure.

### How does RFA work and how long will the procedure last?

We use a fluoroscope (x-ray machine) to visualize the facet joints in the back or neck. We typically administer a series of diagnostic injections around these locations to confirm a patient's pain can improve with lidocaine and steroids at these levels. This is the gold standard for diagnosing facet joint pain.

If the pain does improve with diagnostic injections, we will schedule the radiofrequency ablation. The ablation is essentially the same procedure as the diagnostic injections, but once the needles are in place, we numb the area and use gentle heat to burn the small nerves that are transmitting pain signals.

### Will patients be able to feel the needle?

After numbing the skin with lidocaine, patients typically feel a pressure sensation in the back as the needle advances. While the needle may look long, it is only so we can effectively control where it goes. Only a small fraction of the needle actually enters the patient's skin. It is normal to experience a little procedural discomfort in the neck or back for a few days after the procedure.

### Can patients still take pain medication after the procedure if they still feel some pain?

Patients can still take pain medications after the radiofrequency ablation. Most patients will either decrease their pain medications or eliminate them entirely about 2-4 weeks after the procedure.

### How long does pain relief last? Can it be repeated again?

Radiofrequency ablation works by burning the small nerves that send pain signals from the facet joints (joints between vertebrae in back or neck). Pain relief from radiofrequency ablation typically lasts between 9-12 months. Unfortunately, these small nerves can grow back over time and if (or when) the pain returns, we can certainly re-evaluate the symptoms and do another ablation.

### Who does this help? Is it only for arthritis patients?

This procedure is typically done for patients with degeneration at the facet joints. Degeneration can be due to arthritis or be a secondary problem resulting from disc disease or scoliosis, for example.

*Learn more at*  
[www.thepaincenter.com](http://www.thepaincenter.com)

# Coping with Spring Allergies & Chronic Pain

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Chronic pain patients already deal with physical, emotional, and mental stress because of their condition. Unfortunately, in the spring, there may also be increased pain due to allergies. Pain patients will usually experience skin sensitivities, headaches, and food triggers, so the last thing we want them to worry about is amplified symptoms due to seasonal allergies.

Food allergies can become more apparent in the spring when people's eating habits change. When people consume food that they are allergic to or have an intolerance to, they may show symptoms of swelling, itching, hives, nausea, and more. Even if the discomfort is slight, patients need to be careful of food allergies because they may make it difficult to take daily pain medication and make them even more uncomfortable on top of their pain.

With weather changes come seasonal allergies, which could include symptoms like sneezing or nasal congestion. To a pain patient, this could mean tensing painful muscles when they cough or sneeze. In addition, seasonal allergies can cause sinus headaches that can sometimes be so severe that they are confused for migraines. Sinus headaches feel like throbbing pain around the forehead, behind the nose, and on the cheeks. In order to avoid headaches and muscle pain from seasonal allergies, our specialists recommend washing clothes often to remove allergens collected from the outdoors.

Spring weather may also cause dry skin, which can cause an increase in lotion use – including scented lotions. Patients with skin conditions could have a painful reaction to the chemicals in the lotions. Our experts recommend using non-scented lotions and staying on track with skin treatments received at The Pain Center of Arizona.



If you suffer from chronic pain due to any condition or injury, find hope at The Pain Center of Arizona! Our dedicated team of board certified pain management physicians will work with you to treat your pain, increase your functionality and quality of life, and get

you back into life! We have locations across Arizona, including the Phoenix metropolitan, Northern, and Southern areas! We take multiple insurance plans.

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To make an appointment and take the first step toward getting back into life, **call us today at 1-888-PAINCENTER**. We hope to see you soon!

*The advice and information contained in these articles are for educational purposes only, and is not intended to replace or counter a physician's advice or judgment. Please always consult your physician before taking any advice learned here or in any other educational medical material.*