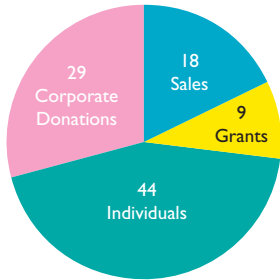


A board of directors who establish policy, oversee daily operations, and manage business affairs governs FMAH. There are no paid employees. Volunteers provide staffing and administrative services, publish a newsletter, and carry out public-education programs.

**FMAH Sources of Income
(in percent)**



For more information about fibromyalgia, call our Information Line at 713-664-0180. A volunteer will return your call. You may go to our Web site, www.fmah.org, or complete this form and send it to:
The Fibromyalgia Association of Houston
P.O. Box 541742
Houston, TX 77254-1742

Name

Mailing Address

City State ZIP

Phone

E-mail Address

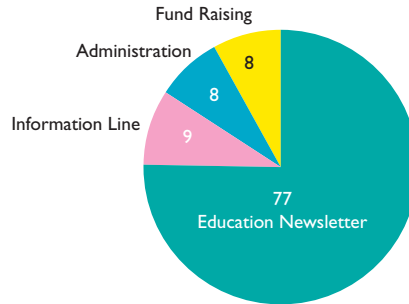
- Please send me an information packet.
 - Please send me the current newsletter.
- I'm enclosing two (2) first-class stamps. The newsletter is free to Texas residents. Out of state subscriptions are \$10/year.

I would like to support the work of the Fibromyalgia Association of Houston with a tax-deductible contribution. Remember that we're all volunteers and your money goes directly to help those suffering from FM.

- Friend \$10.00
- Supporter \$25.00
- Sponsor \$100.00
- Benefactor \$500.00
- Other \$_____

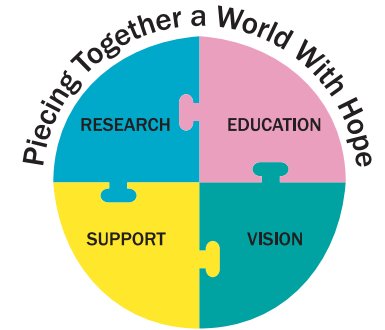
Thank you for your support!

**FMAH Expenditure of Funds
(in percent)**



Fibromyalgia Association of Houston

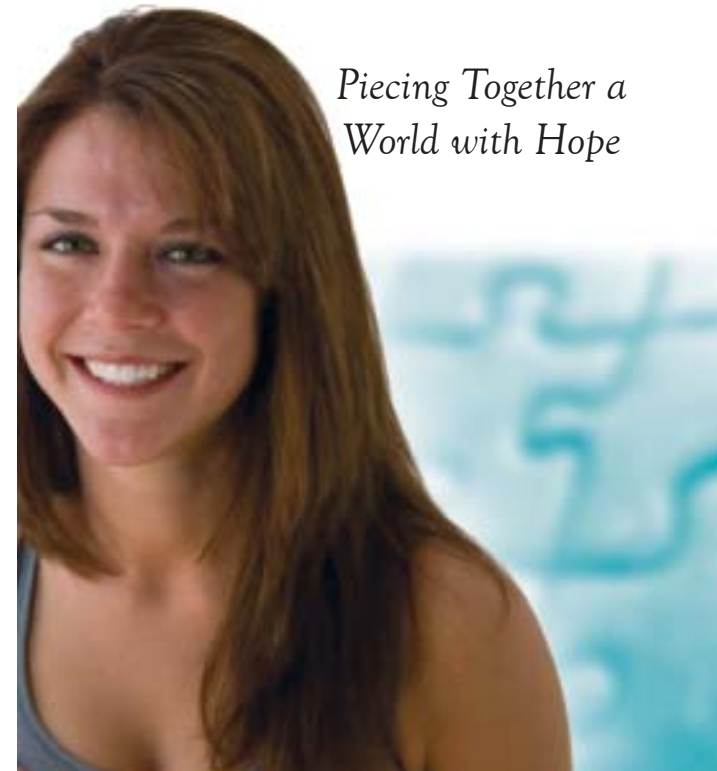
P.O. Box 541742
Houston, TX 77254-1742
Information Line: 713-664-0180
www.fmah.org
FMAHouston@yahoo.com



Fibromyalgia Association of Houston

**FIBROMYALGIA
FACTS**

*Piecing Together a
World with Hope*



What Is Fibromyalgia Syndrome?

You probably know someone with fibromyalgia syndrome, although you may not know that they have it. They don't look different from anyone else. Yet most of them struggle to overcome pain and fatigue every day as they go about routine activities. Fibromyalgia (FM) is a chronic, widespread musculoskeletal pain and fatigue disorder. The cause is unknown. The term "fibro-my-algia" means fibrous tissues, muscles, and pain.

While its cause remains unknown, The American College of Rheumatology has officially recognized the syndrome and established guidelines to diagnose it. Nevertheless, treatment remains a challenge to patients and physicians. Some things that seem to have a positive effect include mild aerobic exercise, appropriate medication, stress reduction, lifestyle modification, and seeking support from others with fibromyalgia.

In addition to pain and fatigue, people with FM may sometimes have some of these symptoms:

- Chronic headaches
- Morning stiffness
- Lack of stamina
- Irritable bladder
- Anxiety
- Easy bruising
- Irritable bowel
- Memory loss and difficulty concentrating
- Feeling of swollen extremities
- Muscle spasms and twitching
- Numbness and tingling sensation
- Dry eyes and mouth
- Jaw pain
- Skin sensitivities
- Visual disturbances

Aggravating Factors

Changes in weather, cold or drafty environments, hormonal changes such as premenstrual

and menopausal states, anxiety, stress, depression, and physical overexertion can contribute to symptom flare-ups.

Helpful Hints*

1. Your pain is real. By trying to deal with it in a positive way, you begin to take control. When you are in control, you are not a victim.
2. Stay out of drafts. Muscles get tense in cold drafts, increasing your pain.
3. Avoid caffeine. It increases pain perception.
4. Eat a light carbohydrate snack before bedtime, e.g. crackers and milk. It will make you sleepy.
5. Reduce stress in your life. Stress may contribute to pain in FM. Take a slow, deep breath in and exhale through your mouth. Repeat 10 times throughout the day.
6. Pace yourself, even if you feel good. If you do too much one day, you'll pay the next.
7. Order our *Strength through Movement* DVD to begin an easy exercise program.
8. Learn more about FM. Visit www.fmah.org.
9. Add fresh fruit, vegetables, and complex carbohydrates to your diet. Drink six to eight glasses of water daily.
10. If you smoke, stop. Smoking constricts blood vessels. Muscles need as much oxygen as the blood can carry.
11. Notify your physician if medications cause side effects. He or she can help you.
12. Take a warm bath or treat yourself to a massage. It may help you to feel better.
13. Fill a tube sock with uncooked regular rice. Stitch the end closed. Heat in the microwave for a minute to have soothing moist heat.
14. If you need help, don't feel guilty asking for it. Guilt only adds to your stress and pain.
15. Focus on positive thoughts and enjoy life. Take up a hobby. It's hard to dwell on pain when you're having fun.

* As always, consult with your physician before making lifestyle changes.

Facts about Fibromyalgia Syndrome

- Fibromyalgia syndrome may affect as many as 10 million Americans.
- It occurs in 4 percent of women and 0.5 percent of men. Children and adolescents are increasingly being diagnosed.
- The cause of FM has not been established, although recent research shows that it is potentially a central nervous system disorder.
- No specific laboratory test or X-ray can reveal the presence of FM. Its symptoms mimic at least 46 other medical conditions.
- There is no cure for FM, but with proper treatment, most people can decrease their pain and fatigue and learn to cope with the syndrome.

The Fibromyalgia Association of Houston

The Fibromyalgia Association of Houston, Inc., (FMAH) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. We are dedicated to improving the quality of life for those affected by fibromyalgia. FMAH also works to promote a better understanding of FM among health professionals and within the community.

Since many FM patients have money challenges, we offer all of our services free of charge. There are no membership dues. In a positive atmosphere, we provide free monthly patient support meetings, often with health professionals as speakers. The Information Line provides individual support by phone, and our newsletter, *The Fibromyalgia Connection*, is sent free to any Texas resident. (Out-of-state patients may subscribe for \$10/year.) We produced a movement video, *Strength through Movement*, and tape speakers at our meetings. The DVDs are available for a nominal amount. We also sell quality books of interest to FM patients. These items are available at www.fmah.org and are discounted at meetings.