



# Fibromyalgia syndrome: the essentials

For patients



## What is fibromyalgia syndrome?



- > Fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS) is real
- > It causes pain from typically non-painful things
- > It is a condition that changes the way the nervous system processes sensory signals; pain can result from this
- > It is not a degenerative, age-related or psychological condition

## What can I expect to feel?

You are likely to experience some, but not necessarily all, of these symptoms:

- > Widespread pain without an injury
- > Old or healed injuries can hurt
- > No energy or struggling to recharge
- > Difficulty with getting to sleep or staying asleep
- > Trouble concentrating or remembering things
- > Frustrated, worried or low in mood
- > Changeable symptoms – things can worsen or improve, sometimes without warning



## How is it diagnosed?

- > There are no X-rays, scans or blood tests that can check for fibromyalgia
- > Your clinician will decide with you whether you need tests to rule other things out
- > There are detailed criteria used to help diagnose FMS – your clinician will share these with you
- > A diagnosis can be made when a pattern of symptoms occur



## What can I do?



- > Get to know about the condition – find and use as many good resources as you can – share them with those around you to help them understand too
- > Be really honest with yourself – ask yourself ‘How do I know my pain medicines are helping?’ and ‘How can I do the best I can to look after myself physically and mentally?’
- > Develop your support team – get to know what you need from people around you, and keep those you know help you close
- > Be open with people about what you need from them
- > Be curious about what helps – your toolbox is yours and no one else’s
- > Be focused and realistic with healthcare professionals to make the best use of your time together – plan ahead what you want from the consultation and discuss this at the start