

Myofascial Pain Syndrome

A Source of Muscular Pain and Related Symptoms

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Condition Sheet



Myofascial Pain Syndrome (MPS) is a chronic condition that affects the body's soft tissues. It most often occurs when a muscle, muscle group, ligament, or tendon is strained or injured. Muscles may ache for a few days, but when pain persists or worsens, it could be a sign of MPS. Pain may be localized or widespread, often in conjunction with more vague symptoms such as numbness, fatigue, or sleep disturbance. Our network of pain management physicians can accurately diagnose if MPS is the source of your pain and help gain relief with effective non-surgical treatment.

Understanding myofascial pain

A tough connective tissue layer called fascia covers our muscles and spreads uninterrupted throughout our bodies. When injured, this tissue may tighten and contract, putting painful pressure on nerves, muscles, bones, or organs. The area where the injury occurs is referred to as a trigger point. It may feel like a “knot” or “band” in the muscle. Often very sensitive to even light pressure, these trigger points typically generate pain not only at the site, but also in various other areas of the body (referred pain). You may experience symptoms that appear totally unrelated to the original injury.

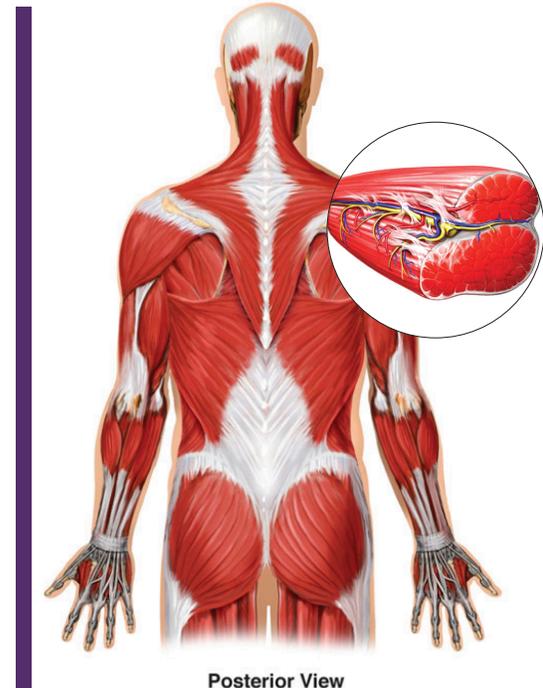
Why MPS occurs

MPS usually develops between ages 20 to 40 and is more common in women and people with sedentary lifestyles. Fortunately, the causes of MPS are well known. They include:

- Damage to musculoskeletal tissues from trauma
- Injured or herniated discs
- Heavy and incorrect lifting
- Overuse of unconditioned muscles
- Immobilization of an arm or leg, such as being in a cast
- Fibromyalgia
- Medical conditions such as heart attack, stomach irritation, or gall bladder problems
- Previous surgeries
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Hormonal changes (PMS or menopause)
- Prolonged exposure to cold, such as sleeping in front of an air conditioning vent
- Stress and tension can make the discomfort of myofascial pain even worse, but are rarely the sole cause of the problem.

The symptoms of MPS

MPS has been linked to many types of pain, from stiffness or a



Posterior View

deep, aching pain in the muscle to headaches, jaw pain, neck pain, low back pain, pelvic pain, and arm and leg pain. You may also experience depression, fatigue, anxiety, or mood disturbances.

The importance of accurate diagnosis

MPS cannot be detected with standard tests such as x-rays, CT scans, or MRIs. To accurately identify the type and location of the trigger point, a methodical physical exam must be conducted

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by physicians with a thorough knowledge of MPS. The four types of trigger points that distinguish MPS are: active, latent, secondary, and satellite.

Effective pain relief without surgery

At our network of pain management centers, treatment for myofascial pain syndrome involves a multifaceted program that has been meticulously developed by our physicians.

Designed to break up the trigger point and relieve areas of muscle soreness, this comprehensive program includes integrating several types of physical therapy, such as ultrasound, electrical stimulation, and myofascial release. It may also include massage therapy, chiropractic or osteopathic manipulation, and nutritional supplementation. Trigger point injections* have also proven to be very effective in reducing spasms and relaxing muscles.

Exercise and change in sleeping habits may favorably impact your condition as well.

**For more details, ask for an information sheet specific to this condition or procedure.*

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