

# CHRIS™

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## WHY PAIN MEDS DON'T WORK FOR FIBROMYALGIA

Here's another reason to warn patients with fibromyalgia against the use of pain medications: they often don't work.

According to a new report, patients with fibromyalgia were found to have reduced binding ability of a type of receptor in the brain that is the target of opioid painkiller drugs.

The new study included positron emission tomography (PET) scans of the brains of 17 women with fibromyalgia, and of an equal number of women without the condition. Results showed that the fibromyalgia patients had reduced mu-opioid receptor (MOR) availability within regions of the brain that normally process and dampen pain signals —specifically, the nucleus accumbens, the anterior cingulate and the amygdala.

“The reduced availability of the receptor was associated with greater pain among people with fibromyalgia,” says lead author Richard E. Harris, PhD.

“These findings could explain why opioids are anecdotally thought to be ineffective in people with fibromyalgia,” he notes. “The finding is significant because it has been difficult to determine the causes of pain in patients with fibromyalgia, to the point that acceptance of the condition by medical practitioners has been slow.”

Opioid pain killers work by binding to opioid receptors in the brain and spinal cord. In addition to morphine, they include codeine, propoxyphene-containing medications such as Darvocet, hydrocodone-containing medications such as Vicodin, and oxycodone-containing medications such as Oxycontin.

The reduced availability of the receptors could result from a reduced number of opioid receptors, enhanced release of

endogenous opioids, or both, Harris adds.

*Journal of Neuroscience* – September 12, 2007;27:10000–10006. [www.jneurosci.org](http://www.jneurosci.org)

## FRUITS & VEGGIES STAVE OFF CROHN'S DISEASE

What accounts for the growing incidence of Crohn's disease (CD) among youngsters? Diet may play a significant role, say scientists.

According to a new report, “an imbalance in consumption of fatty acids, vegetables, and fruits” may be to blame. The analysis of 130 children with CD and 202 healthy control subjects determined that a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, fish and dietary fiber wards off the condition. On the other hand, omega-6 fatty acids upped the risk of the disorder.

*American Journal of Gastroenterology* – September 2007;102:2016–25. [www.amjgastro.com](http://www.amjgastro.com)

## HIGH BP OFTEN DUE TO OVERWEIGHT

About 50% of overweight men and women with high blood pressure may have hypertension as a result of being overweight, researchers reported this week at the American Heart Association's 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Fall Conference of the Council for High Blood Pressure Research.

Researchers in Italy found that about 50 percent of 210 overweight, hypertensive adults, ranging in age from 29 to 65 years, achieved normal body weight and blood pressure after six months of treatment with a reduced-calorie diet.

“This is important because it means that in these patients with elevated blood pressure who were overweight, the blood pressure was not a form of essential hypertension but was hypertension

secondary to body weight,” said Roberto Fogari, MD, lead investigator of the study.

*AHA* – September 29, 2007. [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

## LOW-CARB DIET MAY SPEED COGNITIVE FUNCTION

“Low-carbohydrate diets are often used to promote weight loss, but their effects on psychological function are largely unknown,” explain the authors of a new study.

To learn more, the researchers “compared the effects of a low-carbohydrate, high-fat (LCHF) diet with a conventional high-carbohydrate, low-fat (HCLF) diet on mood and cognitive function.” Both diets had similar caloric and macronutrient content.

A total of 93 overweight or obese individuals completed the study, which involved adhering to one of the diet types for eight weeks.

Findings showed that, both diets significantly reduced body weight and were associated with improvements in mood.” In addition, “there was some evidence for a smaller improvement in cognitive functioning with the LCHF diet with respect to speed of processing, but further studies are required to determine the replicability of this finding.”

*AJCN* – September 2007;86:580-87. [www.ajcn.org](http://www.ajcn.org)

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