



## Fact Sheet Low Dose Naltrexone (LDN) for Fibromyalgia



Low-Dose Naltrexone (LDN) is an emerging treatment option for fibromyalgia that has gained interest due to its potential to reduce pain and improve quality of life.

### Why is it called “low-dose” Naltrexone

Naltrexone is commercially available in Canada as a 50mg tablet. Health Canada approved it for two uses; to help maintain an opioid-free state in detoxified formerly opioid-dependent people or for the treatment of alcohol dependence.

Dosages for these indications use the 50 mg tablet.

Dosages ranging from 0.5 – 6 mg once daily have been used in fibromyalgia patients. These smaller dosages must be made at a compounding pharmacy, and the dosage will depend on the individual’s response.

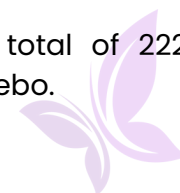
### How does it work

LDN appears to have analgesic and anti-inflammatory effects that reduce pain. Suggested mechanisms may include effects on the glial cells, endorphin regulation and immune system effects.

### What does the research show

There is not a lot of rigorous data out there on how well it works in fibromyalgia. However, it may be worth a trial in individual patients. Most of the published information is individual cases or very small studies which makes broad conclusions difficult. There are also conflicting study results available with some research showing LDN is better than a placebo (sugar pill) for pain in fibromyalgia and other research that shows LDN is not superior to taking a placebo.

The best evidence published so far analyzed four well done trials that included a total of 222 fibromyalgia patients. Improvement in pain scale numbers was better with LDN than a placebo.





## What are the side effects

LDN is generally well tolerated. There has also been a low reported incidence of adverse side effects with the most common side effects being nausea and vivid dreams.

When should this medication NOT be used?

## When should this medication NOT be used

It is important to note that LDN CANNOT be taken while taking opioids. Naltrexone is an opioid receptor blocker and will therefore block the effect of opioids.

Refer to your doctor and / or pharmacist to discuss other contraindications

## Challenges and Considerations

**Not Yet Widely Prescribed:** Since LDN is off-label for fibromyalgia, some doctors may be hesitant to prescribe it.

**Dosage Variability:** Optimal dosing can vary among individuals, requiring careful titration. Some people with fibromyalgia may be sensitive to certain medications, may need a lower starting dose and increase slowly to an optimal dose, under a prescriber's guidance.

**May Take Time to Work:** For patients who see benefits, it may occur within weeks, while for others it may take a few months.

**Availability:** It may be difficult to find a compounding pharmacy depending on where you live.

## Is It Worth Trying

For those who haven't found relief with traditional fibromyalgia treatments, LDN could be a promising alternative.





## References

### Articles (Journal & Research)

Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (2024): The Korean Journal of Pain, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.3344/kjp.24202>

Holton, David W., et al. "The Use of Low-Dose Naltrexone (LDN) as a Novel Anti-Inflammatory Treatment for Chronic Pain." Journal of Pain Research, U.S. National Library of Medicine, 2014, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3962576/>

### Websites / Online Resources

Alberta Rheumatology Association. Low-Dose Naltrexone | Natural Health Products. <https://albertarheumatology.com/natural-health-products/low-dose-naltrexone/>

BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre. Low Dose Naltrexone (Revised Nov. 7, 2022). [http://www.bcwomens.ca/Specialized-Services-Site/Documents/Complex%20Chronic%20Diseases%20\(CCDP\)/Low%20Dose%20Naltrexone%20revised%20Nov%207%202022.pdf](http://www.bcwomens.ca/Specialized-Services-Site/Documents/Complex%20Chronic%20Diseases%20(CCDP)/Low%20Dose%20Naltrexone%20revised%20Nov%207%202022.pdf)

LDN Research Trust. LDN Research Trust. <https://ldnresearchtrust.org/>

LDN Pharmacists. <https://ldnresearchtrust.org/ldn-pharmacists>

2024 LDN Guides. [https://ldnresearchtrust.org/2024\\_LDN\\_Guides](https://ldnresearchtrust.org/2024_LDN_Guides)

