

PARISH HEALTH MINISTRY

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FIBROMYALGIA SYNDROME (FMS) is a very common condition of widespread muscular pain and fatigue. There are 7 – 10 million Americans who suffer from FMS and women are affected most by FMS at a ratio of 20:1! **Symptoms:** FMS patients have widespread body pain, which often seems to arise in the muscle. Although FMS patients are aware of pain when they are resting, it is most noticeable when they use their muscles, particularly with repetitive activities. As a consequence of muscle pain, many FMS patients severely limit their activities including exercise routines. This results in their becoming physically unfit – which eventually makes their FMS worse. Other common symptoms include a decreased sense of energy, disturbances of sleep, and varying degrees of anxiety and depression. **Long-Term Outcome:** There is currently no accepted cure for this condition. Most patients can expect to have this problem lifelong, but improvement may be obtained with appropriate treatment. **Treatment:** The treatment of FMS is frustrating for both patients and their physician. Drugs used to treat musculoskeletal pain, such as aspirin, ibuprofen and cortisone are not particularly helpful. Education is an essential component that helps patients understand what can or can't be done as well as teaching them to help themselves. There is increasing evidence that a regular exercise routine is essential for all FMS patients. Patients who do get into an exercise regimen experience worthwhile improvement. In general, 20 minutes of physical activity, 3 times a week at a 70 % of maximum heart rate is sufficient to maintain a reasonable level of aerobic fitness.

The Women of the ELCA will be promoting **women's holistic health** as they gather July 5-10 for their sixth Triennial Gathering in San Antonio, TX. From 2005 to 2008, women of the ELCA plan to improve their own health and the health of others under the initiative "Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls." The goals of the initiative are to educate women and girls to care for themselves physically, spiritually, and emotionally, to help prevent health risks from continuing, and advocate for more research to hasten the elimination of heart disease and stroke. "The decision to focus on women's heart health is in part because the heart is the center of our existence; it's the center of love and the center of our being" said Linda Post Bushkofsky, Executive Director, Women of the ELCA.

PENNY POWER: April/May - \$59; Year to date - \$146. Thank you for your continued support to the Parish Nurse ministry.