

The Truth About Guaifenesin and Fibromyalgia!

Hi, I'm Lisa Klein Weber. In 2003 I was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia. Today, I consider myself cured. I have written a book <http://www.releasefibromyalgia.com/blue2/index.html> and I write a blog on releasing Fibro <http://www.releasefibromyalgia.com> .

Guaifenesin was an essential part of both my treatment of and my understanding of Fibromyalgia. I am not a doctor. I am not giving you medical advice. I am sharing with you what my personal opinion is based on my research and experience. You may freely redistribute this ebook as long as it remains free and intact.

So does Guaifenesin reverse Fibromyalgia? Yes, I think it does! But there is a lot more to this story of Fibromyalgia and Guaifenesin than just that simple statement.

Where Can I Find Guaifenesin?

Guaifenesin is a non-prescription drug that can be found under the label Mucinex, and in generic labels. There are fast acting tablets and extended release tablets. I take the extended release Mucinex tablets that have nothing else in them – only Guaifenesin. They can be found in the Expectorant area of places like Longs and Walmart.

My History with Guaifenesin

In year 3 of my recovery, I was getting a massage, and my massage therapist told me of a man she had treated the day before who had fibromyalgia, but he treated it with an over the counter drug and was all better now. He felt "like butter" she said, meaning there were no knots or issues in his muscles.

She couldn't remember the drug but an internet search revealed it to me: Guaifenesin.

I immediately read everything I could find about the 'Guaifenesin Protocol' and discussed it with my doctor and started on it within a week.

The Guaifenesin Protocol in a Nutshell

The treatment of fibromyalgia with Guaifenesin is spearheaded by a Dr. St. Amand in California. In the 1960's, before the term fibromyalgia was even coined, he was treating fibromyalgics in his own practice with gout medications.

He knew fibromyalgia had nothing to do with Uric Acid, which is the culprit causing joints to swell in gout, but through trial and error he found that gout medications were effective with fibromyalgia too.

Gout medications have side effects so he was always on the lookout for a new medication that would help and eventually he settled on Guaifenesin because it has very little side effects but it helped his patients.

From reading his book, it seems to me that he believes fibromyalgia is caused by a gene, which makes a fibromyalgia patient be missing an enzyme in the kidneys. This enzyme tells the kidneys how to get rid of phosphates from the body.

Since fibromyalgics, he believes, are missing the enzyme, phosphates build up in the body instead. Since phosphates build up in the body, they have to be stored somewhere. The body puts them in cells, any available cell anywhere. As the phosphates move in, water and calcium move in too.

The cells get fuller and fuller and symptoms start.

Dr. St. Amand believes Guaifenesin stimulates the release of the phosphates from the cells and allows the kidneys to fully excrete the phosphates. This happens in one muscle or muscle group or organ or tendon or area at a time.

In his experience, as the phosphates start coming out of the cells, the patient '**cycles**' or re-experiences the same pain and fatigue she felt

as the phosphates were being laid down. The person has bad days when they are cycling, and good days in between the cycles.

Eventually, after years in most cases, all the phosphates are moved out of the body and the person is symptom-free.

2 Guaifenesin Protocol “Issues”

- 1) Dr. St. Amand does say a person with fibromyalgia will need to take guaifenesin forever in order to prevent the re-filling of the cells with phosphates.
- 2) Dr St. Amand says that salicylate acid in creams, lotions, shampoos, makeup, mouthwash or medications will block the action of the guaifenesin by sitting in the same receptors in the kidneys that the guaifenesin needs to use to secrete phosphates via the urine.

Salicylate acid is made by plants, so any product with Aloe vera, coconut oil, spearmint, vanilla, jojoba oil, menthol, or any other plant-derived substance would be an offender.

So, while on guaifenesin, according to Dr. St. Amand, the patient will only have a response if they are ultra-careful never to allow salicylate acid to touch their skin – which is hard since it’s in the majority of shampoos, creams, lotions, deodorants, and makeup.

For More Information on the Protocol

The book they wrote is:

What your Doctor May Not Tell you about Fibromyalgia

By Dr. Paul St. Amand m.d. and Claudia Marek.

And the website is:

<http://fibromyalgiatreatment.com/>

My Experience with the Guaifenesin Protocol

So this was in year 3 of my recovery. I was feeling much better than I had in year one: I was able to carry my son again and I was able to work on the computer a bit, and I wasn't so tired all the time, but I was still had a lot of muscle pain all over my body.

So, I started the Guaifenesin protocol. I was very concerned about salicylates so I just stopped everything. I stopped wearing makeup, I started shampooing my hair and brushing my teeth with baking soda. I switched to that rock deodorant thing. I stopped taking all other medications and herbs except my pain medication. (this is not necessary – I could have searched out products without salicylates or bought ones specially made that way)

I started the protocol on a Thursday, and by Sunday I noticed a HUGE improvement!

I still had muscle pain but the splinting had stopped. My neck and back muscles had been 'splinting' which means they were tightening up in a protective manner. I noticed on that Sunday that my neck felt free and easy in a way I hadn't remembered was possible.

I continued with the protocol and watched for the 'cycling' Dr. Amand talked about. I never felt anything I could definitely call cycling. I just felt gradually better and better.

Well, I was sold. So I wasn't cycling, so what. I continued on the protocol and went on with my life. I was a bit perplexed, but results were results.

After about 11 months I started noticing that I was not continuing to improve. I felt I had hit a plateau. I paid close attention to my state. I upped my dosage. I added a fast-acting pill to my slow-acting pill. This is all talked about in the book.

As I was noticing and contemplating this plateau, I realized that although I was very appreciative of my improvement I did not want to continue taking guaifenesin for the rest of my life. I would rather take nothing if possible. I generally don't even take vitamins.

Eventually, after several months of continuing to plateau – to feel no benefit from the continued ingestion of the guaifenesin – I decided to stop taking it and see what happened.

I stopped taking it, and continued my healing pursuits via bodywork and mindwork: stretching, trigger point massage, massage appointments, and trying to become a very happy person.

I was now in year 4 of my recovery, and stopping Guaifenesin had no negative effect on me. I continued to improve and have less pain and more energy.

So, I looked at Guaifenesin like this: it was a major step in my healing journey. Maybe it activated something within my body. Whatever it did, I was appreciative, and I would play it by ear to decide if I ever wanted to start it again.

I started taking the recommended 300 mg of Guai twice a day. When I stopped taking Guai I was taking 1200 mg twice a day.

And Then ... A Major Guai Discovery

So, now in year six, as I was doing research for this book, I come across this webpage on Guaifenesin:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guaifenesin> which says this:

*Because of its uricosuric effect, guaifenesin was chosen in the 1990s for the experimental guaifenesin protocol – a treatment for fibromyalgia. Proponents of the guaifenesin protocol believe that it cures fibromyalgia by removing excess phosphate from the body. **A lesser publicized and thus lesser known fact among fibromyalgia sufferers is that guaifenesin has skeletal muscle relaxant activity**, like its carbamate ester methocarbamol which is used primarily for that purpose. This may explain some of the symptomatic relief experienced by fibromyalgia sufferers who take guaifenesin.*

Bold is mine.

What!? Guaifenesin is a skeletal muscle relaxant!?!?

Well that explains EVERYTHING! My entire experience is now brought into the light. I love it!

So, my entire theory about curing fibromyalgia is that I, as a person needed to learn to relax, truly relax on a very deep level in all aspects of my life.

Over time, during my life, my brain would think untrue or anxious or fearful thoughts which would in turn cause my body to tense and circulate stress chemicals, and these chemicals would then cause my thoughts to become more anxious and fearful which would then cause my body to tense more and more.

As I took Guaifenesin, even though I hadn't yet learned to stop thinking thoughts that made me feel anxious, my muscles still were able relax! Deeply and Truly Relax! And as they relaxed, my body was able to heal.

Now, we have one more tool to add to the fibromyalgia cure toolbox: a safe, effective muscle relaxant. And as our bodies relax, our minds can follow more easily.

Is Guaifenesin Right for You?

Well, that's a question you will have to answer for yourself. Really ask yourself that question. Do you feel interested in pursuing guaifenesin as a treatment for your fibromyalgia?

If so, will you take it as a skeletal muscle relaxant or try the guaifenesin protocol as outlined by Dr. Amand? Which calls to you more?

Dr. Amand does not recommend self treatment and I won't either. He says take the book to your doctor and talk it over with her.

For the purposes of skeletal muscle relaxation, I don't believe that salicylates need to be avoided, but this is a question to ask your doctor to be certain.

Here's another webpage that sheds some more light on how guaifenesin could work for fibromyalgia without sticking to the protocol: <http://web.mit.edu/london/www/guai.html>

It says guai is indeed a skeletal muscle relaxant, and it has analgesic (pain-killing) properties. It also says that some people who are sensitive to medications (I'm not) do get side-effects while on guai (I never did) and this could explain the 'cycling' hypothesis. Here's an interesting paragraph on dosage:

To achieve muscle paralysis, the recommended dose for large animals is 50mg per pound. Assuming a similar dose rate for humans, for a person weighing 100 pounds, the recommended dose would be 5000mg. Of course, this amount is meant for extreme relaxation to allow for surgery. A muscle relaxant effect would still be seen at much lower doses. Patients on guaifenesin for fibromyalgia take anywhere from 600 to 3600mg per day. Dr. St. Amand's own wife takes as much as 4800mg per day. So this effect would likely be significant in these people.

A Body Map

Dr. St. Amand recommends getting a mapping of your muscles by your doctor or a therapist or chiropractor – anyone skilled in feeling the “lumps and bumps” of fibromyalgia.

Basically your practitioner would feel every muscle and tendon in your body and note on a paper with a picture of a human body the size and location of all your swellings.

This way you can map your progress not just with how you feel, but also in how much your lumps and bumps shrink.

Dr. St Amand recommends this mainly, I believe, because he expects you to *feel* a lot worse before you feel better and so having assurance that you are really getting better is extremely valuable. I agree with this, even though I don't expect everyone to feel worse before they feel better.

In my experience, once you know you are healing, it's easy to handle occasional cycling or 'rebound soreness' as I call it. It just doesn't hurt so much once you know it is indicating healing.

So What Do I Think Is the Truth?

Based on my experience with Guaifenesin and other methods to find relief from Fibromyalgia symptoms, I think the truth behind Guaifenesin and Fibromyalgia is that the skeletal muscle relaxant action causes my muscles to relax fully.

I think that one of the reasons people get Fibromyalgia is because their nervous systems are in overdrive, which leads to a lot of muscular tension. When the muscles are chronically tense, stress chemicals like adrenaline and cortisol and metabolic wastes get stuck in the tissues. This contributes to pain and stiffness.

I think guaifenesin is effective for fibromyalgia because it chemically induces relaxation in the muscles. I think the reason people have to take Guaifenesin forever to keep their same level of relief is because they don't know how to induce that relaxation on their own – so if they stop taking Guai, their muscles stiffen up again and the process starts all over.

Although I don't agree entirely with Dr. St. Amand's hypothesis regarding fibromyalgia and Guaifenesin, I think he is a genius who has brought great relief to thousands of people and I deeply appreciate his work. And I freely admit he may be right and I may be wrong. 😊

What About the Cycling?

In Dr. St. Amand's book, he talks about cycling, and says that most patients do experience an increase in pain, fatigue, and related symptoms when taking their effective dose of Guai. He attributes this to the phosphates and accompanying calcium and water moving in and out of the cells as Guaifenesin causes the phosphates to be removed from the body.

I have a different but similar theory. This is entirely a theory based on my own experience.

I believe that as Guai causes muscles to relax and let go of tension, the stress chemicals and metabolic wastes are released out of the tissues and the body starts to clear them away. This leads to a feeling similar to how the muscles feel the day after an intense workout. They are sore! And stiff because of a buildup of lactic acid. And as muscles relax and allow a release of stress chemicals on a very deep level, the same kind of soreness occurs.

When every muscle in the body is chronically tense, as I believe they are with Fibro, this 'rebound soreness' as I call it, can be extreme and intense and can affect the entire body at the same time.

I can actually induce this 'rebound soreness' in my own body with intense stretching or repeated '**active release signaling**' to a specific muscle group, although the more I heal, the less deposits I have left in my body to release – so it rarely happens these days.

Read about Active Release Signaling here:

<http://www.releasefibromyalgia.com/muscle-relaxation-fibro/>

Get my book on Releasing Fibromyalgia here:

<http://www.releasefibromyalgia.com/blue2/index.html>

p.s. about 2 weeks ago I got a short massage with a massage therapist I've never seen before. When we were done, she said "Your back has no knots in it, which is very unusual."

And I just had to laugh. I felt like I had come full circle from when my regular massage therapist told me about the man who was 'like butter' because of Guaifenesin, which introduced me to the drug.

I don't think my own 'like butter' state is entirely due to Guaifenesin, as I have developed and adopted many drug-free processes that induce this state in my muscles, but it definitely helped on my journey!

Connect with me here! <http://www.releasefibromyalgia.com/>

I'd love to hear from you, Lisa