

VIEWPOINTS

Dr. Jacob Teitelbaum Looks at Effectively Treating Long Covid

Interview by Sheldon Baker

Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, is one of the most frequently quoted post viral CFS, fibromyalgia, energy, sleep and pain medical authorities in the world. He is the author of 12 books including You Can Heal from Long Covid (June 10, 2024), the best-selling From Fatigued to Fantastic! (Penguin/Avery 2021), Pain Free, 1,2,3!, the Complete Guide to Beating Sugar Addiction, Real Cause Real Cure, The Fatigue and Fibromyalgia Solution, The Perfect Multivitamin, and the popular free Smart Phone app Cures A-Z. He is the lead author of 8 studies and three medical textbook chapters on effective treatment for fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome. Dr. Teitelbaum appears often as a guest on news and talk shows nationwide including Good Morning America, The Dr. Oz Show, Oprah & Friends, CNN, and FoxNewsHealth. Learn more at www.Vitality101.com and www.EndFatigue.com/ <https://www.facebook.com/JacobTeitelbaumMD/>

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Integrative Medicine: A Clinician's Journal (IMCJ): Is it correct to say that you are the go-to expert on healing from Long Covid?

Jacob Teitelbaum, MD: Well, yes. I had post viral chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) in 1975, which is what Long Covid is today. It knocked me out of medical school and left me homeless. I was sleeping in parks, and that was the setting for my learning how to recover. I've been researching, writing and teaching about effective treatments for these conditions now for almost 50 years.

IMCJ: Do post-viral chronic fatigue as well as fibromyalgia health issues affect a lot of people?

Dr. Teitelbaum: Yes. They are all basically the same process with different faces. They affected about six million people before Covid. Now we're looking at almost 17-to-20 million people who have these conditions.

IMCJ: I know we're getting away a little from Long Covid, but sometimes when we look at fibromyalgia, it's often misdiagnosed by doctors. Am I correct?

Dr. Teitelbaum: Most doctors don't even know what the term fibromyalgia means or the criteria for properly diagnosing it. About 85% of people who have CFS, fibromyalgia and Long Covid receive an incorrect diagnosis, with their doctors saying, 'you're just tired, depressed, or a hypochondriac.' This lack of a correct diagnosis amplifies the problem.

Fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome and Long Covid (FMS/CFS/LC), are complex multisystem syndromes. So, they may present with a wide range of seemingly unrelated symptoms. Making it simple to start, if people have the paradox of severe fatigue and inability to get restful sleep, along with brain fog, and widespread discomfort lasting over three months, suspect FMS/CFS/LC. Even if they have other conditions. For example, lupus, MS, and other autoimmune illnesses trigger secondary fibromyalgia in about one-third of cases. The treatment which is then required is very different.

Free Resources for Practitioners and the Public

Email Dr. Teitelbaum at FatigueDoc@gmail.com and ask for free information sheets on recovering from:

1. CFS/FMS/LC
2. POTS – including free home testing and how to recover
3. MCAS-sensitivities
4. Shortness of breath
5. Covid organ damage
6. How to get well if one is in poverty
7. Metformin to prevent Long Covid

Please specify which of these you are requesting, and whether you are a health practitioner or if you have the conditions.

IMCJ: What research have you conducted to find the reasons for Long Covid?

Dr. Teitelbaum: I have been the primary investigator on 12 studies of post-viral and other causes of CFS/FMS. Eight of these showed effective treatments. Our research suggests that CFS/FMS/LC all represent a human energy crisis.

There are many different triggers for the low energy. For example, one way that our body fights infections is to shut down mitochondrial energy production to starve the invader. When the infection is gone, the mitochondrial energy furnaces usually turn back on. But sometimes, they are unable to do so. For example, when there are remnants of dead, or even living, infectious particles. These can also trigger immune system overdrive, followed by exhaustion.

The area in our body that uses most energy for its size is a critical control center called the hypothalamus. When energy drops, this circuit breaker drops into a low function mode. The hypothalamus controls sleep, hormones, temperature, and our autonomic system. When this critical gland downshifts, as it were, this triggers a cascade of disability.

IMCJ: Would somebody know they have fibromyalgia or have Long Covid, or think it's something else entirely?

Dr. Teitelbaum: Because of lack of physician education, only 15% of people with these conditions have received the correct diagnosis. Again, suspect these if the patient has the symptoms noted above. Even if they also have dozens of other confusing symptoms.

IMCJ: Why do you think so many people were affected by Long Covid and others were not?

Dr. Teitelbaum: We see this with many infections. For example, a study was conducted by Dr. Leonard Jason, who followed college students who contracted infectious mono (EBV). About 25% developed post-viral CFS. There are over a dozen infections, including Lyme disease, that have been shown to trigger post-viral CFS/FMS.

In my experience, those who are already undergoing an energy crisis in their lives are most prone to having the infection turn into fibromyalgia. For example, those that have severe autoimmune illnesses or even cancer. Or people who were already being overwhelmed by life's stresses. Especially if they then tried to work during their infection, instead of resting.

IMCJ: So poor diet, stress and things that deplete our energy play a role.

Dr. Teitelbaum: Absolutely. If someone in a household comes down with Covid, on average, one-out-of-six household members are likely to catch it. What increases a person's risk? Here are the big four reasons.

1. Excess stress
2. Nutritional deficiencies
3. Poor sleep
4. Dehydration

IMCJ: They say an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. What do you recommend?

Dr. Teitelbaum: Begin with a good multivitamin. I personally take a vitamin powder called the Energy Revitalization drink mix. It replaces over a dozen pills with a simple drink daily providing optimal levels and forms of 30 key nutrients. For those who prefer tablets, I use the Essentials multivitamin. Also, as I always state stay hydrated, but avoid heavily sweetened drinks, such as sodas or juices. Remember, the part of your immune system that makes first contact with these infections, called IgA antibodies, works on the moist surfaces such as the mouth, nose, or lungs. It's the Navy part of our immune system. If you're dehydrated, the immune system is figuratively in dry dock and not working up to snuff. Research also shows the importance of getting eight hours of sleep at night to optimize immunity. Meanwhile, if you do get the infection, take off from work and go to bed until it passes. These really are common-sense things.

IMCJ: Is Long Covid more common in men or women?

Dr. Teitelbaum: Most illnesses that affect immunity impact women three-times as often as men. And CFS/FMS/LC follows this pattern. There is a very high concentration of genes affecting immunity on the X chromosome. Women have two X chromosomes, while men only have one.

IMCJ: Have you experienced Covid?

Dr. Teitelbaum: Yes, I had Covid and it was no big deal. I went to bed with my Kindle and iced tea, and I had a very pleasant four days. Then I was back to work and healthy.

IMCJ: How much damage does Long Covid do to the body long term?

Dr. Teitelbaum: In most people, none. A modest percent might have permanent issues like heart or lung damage, but for most, Long Covid is quite reversible.

Our research shows that for the CFS/FMS components of Long Covid, using our SHINE protocol results in an average 90% increase in quality-of-life ($P < .0001$ vs placebo). This optimizes sleep, hormones/and hypotension (POTS), infections, nutrition, and exercise as able.

For direct organ damage in the heart, lung, and brain, it is critical to shut down any persistent oxidative and inflammatory stress. I do this using reduced glutathione (Clinical Glutathione) and the multivitamin for the antioxidants. I also give a potent anti-inflammatory herbal mix (Curaphen Extra Strength) which settles down both the lipoxygenase (LOX) and cyclooxygenase (COX) inflammatory systems, so organ healing can begin. I give these for about 8-to-12 weeks and then continue with just the multivitamin. I also use a supplement called PEA (Palmitoylethanolamide) 600-900 milligrams a day in a high-absorption form if there is chronic pain, which then

usually triggers microglial activation. PEA settles this down. There is an increase in sensitivities such as MCAS or if there was any neurologic injury. PEA helps stimulate neurologic recovery. AS For the PEA, I warn people that it will take three months to start seeing the benefits. PEA directly settles down both mast cells and microglial activation, and actually can help neural regeneration. It takes about two to three months to start working, but it can help the entire pain, fatigue, and sensitivity process while also facilitating recovery of damaged neurons. The research on this molecule is quite fascinating. Absorption of PEA is difficult. I recommend the new PEA Healthy Inflammation Response with Serratiopeptidase which contains Gammasorb to enhance absorption as well as enzymes that can help break down excessive clotting.

IMCJ: So, there is a road to recovery.

Dr. Teitelbaum: Oh God, yes. My book *From Fatigued to Fantastic!* (4th revised edition, Avery Penguin) is like a textbook that will guide both practitioners and people with CFS/FMS/LC on how to recover. My new book, *You Can Heal from Long Covid*, is a much simpler read for the lay public.

IMCJ: Will Covid be with us forever?

Dr. Teitelbaum: Probably, until it evolves, or we call it something else. But it likely will not be a big deal, as our immune systems adapt to it.

IMCJ: Just to be clear, we need vaccine alternatives.

Dr. Teitelbaum: The Covid vaccine had a major effect on unnecessarily polarizing the population medically. I'm not impressed with it, though it can play a beneficial role in some subpopulations. More important, in my humble opinion, we need to develop new antibiotics, because we'll have more plagues coming through. Where Covid killed less than 1% of the population, and often selected out the sickest, it serves us to remember antibiotic sensitive plagues such as the Bubonic Plague. This killed about half of the European population. We forget that throughout human history, infections have killed far more people than wars. So, we need to develop strategies to handle new infections. Vaccines are especially helpful for viruses such as polio, measles, and smallpox, which do not mutate often. They are less helpful for infections which do.

It is important that we develop new families of antibiotics that we set aside and do not use except for very rare emergencies, so that we do not develop microbial resistance to them, and they can be rapidly available and at hand for upcoming antibiotic-sensitive new plagues. We may also look to nature to understand how anti-infectious agents that protect plants and beehives, for example to avoid resistance issues. But it's especially important to

augment our own immune systems with optimal nutrition, sleep and herbal support along with common sense, hydration, and knowing when to rest.

IMCJ: When Covid was at its height, on television news programming, hospital video of Covid patients were usually obese or significantly overweight. They did not look healthy. That goes along with what you said earlier.

Dr. Teitelbaum: Let me provide this thought, especially for those with Long Covid: Overweight people are at higher risk of contracting Long Covid. There's a simple old diabetes medication called Metformin that costs \$10. There are multiple studies showing that Metformin decreases the risk of getting Long Covid by 63%, and also decreases the risk of dying from Covid by 30%-70%. You want to start it in the first three-to-four days. This is something I recommend people have in their medicine cabinet to start at the first sign of Covid infection. Metformin is effective, accessible, safe, and affordable.

IMCJ: What's the best place for *InnoVision* readers to purchase your book.

Dr. Teitelbaum: Amazon.

IMCJ: Any additional information that we need to cover.

Dr. Teitelbaum: Long Covid, CFS, and fibromyalgia are optional. There's no shortage of effective treatments. Simply a lack of effective physician education. This is one more area where a CAM treatment approach shines.