

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

what is it and why are women at risk?



Your Health Is Important

Take care of your health. Do it for yourself and for your family.

For more information about chronic fatigue syndrome call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at: **1-888-232-3228**

Or visit their Web site at: **www.cdc.gov**

The Chronic Fatigue and Immunological Dysfunction Association advises support groups for this disease. Call them for more information at: **1-800-442-3437**

Women are affected by CFS three times as much as men.

How Doctors Test for CFS

Doctors still are not sure what causes chronic fatigue syndrome. They will ask you questions about your health history. They will do a physical exam and draw blood from your arm for a laboratory test.

It is important that you are honest about how long you have been feeling the signs of CFS. The same signs could also mean a different illness.

Why Are You Tired All the Time?

You just don't seem to have the energy you used to. When you wake up in the morning, you're still as tired as ever.

You're eating the same foods. You don't feel sick – why are you feeling so low?

You might have chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), a disease that makes you feel tired all the time no matter what you do.

CFS Affects More Women than Men

Studies show that women are affected by CFS three times as much as men.

Ninety percent of CFS cases affect people between the ages of 25 and 50 – when you should be the most active.

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How to Recognize CFS

Doctors agree that a person with chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) must (1) feel tired almost all the time for six months or longer, and (2) not have other medical conditions found as a cause.

You must also have four of the following signs at the same time:

- Loss of memory
- Poor concentration
- Sore throat
- Tender lymph glands (found in the neck)
- Muscle pain
- Pain in joints without swelling or redness
- Headaches
- Feeling tired even after sleeping
- Feeling tired even 24 hours after doing a common activity

Five Types of Treatment For CFS

- 1. Physical Activity** – CFS patients need to find an exercise pace that will keep their body fit without causing exhaustion. Light exercise and stretching works for some patients, yoga and tai-chi is recommended for others.
- 2. Education and Counseling** – Patients who were once very active may experience emotional problems. Therapists have helped patients improve their level of activity without causing further effects of CFS.
- 3. Acupuncture & Massage Therapy** – Acupuncture and massage therapy concentrate on relieving your body's pain and releasing its energy. Some patients feel better after receiving these types of treatments. Others report no change.
- 4. Prescription Medication** – Doctors can prescribe drugs to treat the signs of CFS. These drugs do not cure CFS and they might also have bad side effects.
- 5. Vitamins, Herbal Supplements** – Some patients have said that taking vitamin supplements or herbal medicines such as Echinacea, ginseng, and primrose oil relieve CFS. But even natural medicines and vitamins can have harmful side effects for some people.

Different treatments work for different people. Consult with a health care professional before trying any treatments.

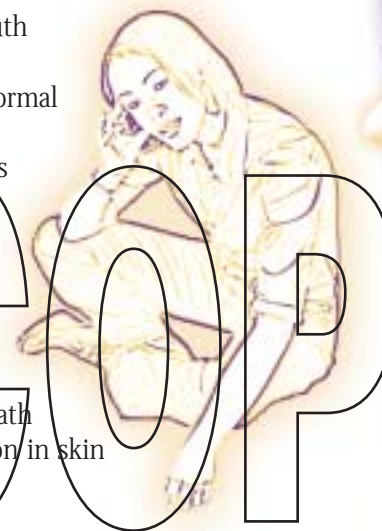
Twenty-Five Effects of CFS

1. Always tired
2. Insomnia (cannot sleep)
3. Weakness
4. Pain in abdomen (stomach area)
5. Cannot handle alcohol
6. Bloating
7. Chest pain
8. Chronic cough
9. Diarrhea
10. Dizziness
11. Dry eyes or mouth
12. Earaches
13. Heartbeat not normal
14. Jaw pain
15. Morning stiffness
16. Nausea
17. Night sweats
18. Depression
19. Irritability
20. Anxiety
21. Panic attacks
22. Shortness of breath
23. Tingling sensation in skin
24. Weight loss
25. Fever

Three Simple Steps for Dealing with CFS

- Have a health care professional examine you to rule out other possible causes
- Go to a doctor or clinic for a complete examination and blood test
- Work with a health care professional to find a treatment that works for you

Feel good about your health. Feel good about yourself!



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