

CHRONIC FATIGUE

TEENS AND YOUNG
ADULTS

WHAT IS CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME?

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) is a condition that causes one to feel overly tired for a long period of time. The cause of CFS is unknown, though some think it comes about after a viral infection. This disease can be confusing to diagnose and to treat. Symptoms vary widely and can include:

- unusually long lasting exhaustion after activity
- trouble concentrating or remembering
- feeling unrested after sleep
- muscle soreness
- painful joints
- sore throat

It is completely normal to feel tired occasionally. Tiredness and fatigue become problems when they continue for longer than usual and get in the way of daily life.

BUT DON'T WORRY!

Fatigue can be very troublesome. It is important to know when to see your doctor and how to live with a CFS diagnosis. The key to living with CFS is managing symptoms so that they don't get in the way of normal life.

Learn More



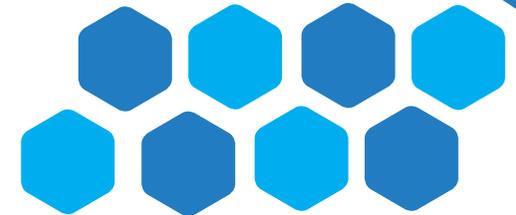
www.cdc.gov/cfs/pediatric/index.html



www.kidshealth.org/en/teens/cfs.html



www.solvecfs.org/mecfs-resources/patient-resources/youth/



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DO I HAVE CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME?



WHY AM I ALWAYS TIRED?

Chronic fatigue can be caused by many things. Doctors will look for other possible causes before diagnosing CFS. These include:

- mono
- depression
- Lyme disease
- fibromyalgia

GETTING DIAGNOSED

You should see a doctor if you have been feeling fatigued for over 2 weeks. A doctor will then try to rule out other possible causes of the fatigue. If no other causes can be found, a doctor may consider a CFS diagnosis.

Most cases of CFS are diagnosed after 6 months of fatigue and other symptoms. For children and teens, however, some doctors have argued that a diagnosis can be made after only 3 months.

LIVING WITH CFS

CFS can go away with time, or it can come and go. The most important part of living with CFS is managing the symptoms so that you can live a normal life.

Below are just some of the ways that the symptoms of CFS are managed:

- **Exercise:** Though the severity of symptoms can vary, some amount of exercise promotes energy and feelings of well being. Don't overdo it; find what level of activity you are comfortable with and go from there.
- **Diet:** There are no definite links between nutrition and CFS, avoiding junk food, caffeine, and alcohol along with eating healthier food can help lessen discomfort.
- **Therapy:** A therapist or counselor can help you deal with negative thoughts that may arise.
- **Medication:** Over-the-counter pain medications can help some. Doctors may also choose to prescribe antidepressants or other pain medications.

NOTE: All cases of CFS are different. Symptoms can vary and so can reactions to certain treatments. A good line of communication with your doctor is important so that you can develop a plan that works best for you.

FOR PARENTS

If your kid has been diagnosed with CFS, it is important to learn how to manage the disease so that its symptoms interfere as little as possible with school, socializing, and daily activities.



Believe in your child: Be encouraging your teen. Symptoms may be difficult for them to explain, so it is important that you validate their problem to relieve the mental stress this illness can cause. Also, do your research so that you can better understand what they are going through.



Work with their school: CFS can hinder your child's ability to focus on or to even attend school. Educate their school of the problems they face. Consider a mix of home schooling and regular school. You may also look into an Individualized Education Plan or a 504 Plan.



Help them socialize: With CFS, your child might not always have the energy to socialize. Communicate with them and with their school. Giving them the opportunity to socialize will help relieve feelings of isolation and is important for living with the illness.