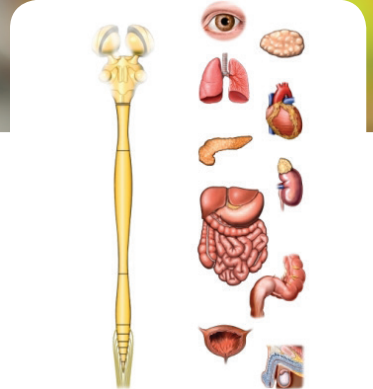


Body Conditions: CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME (CFS)

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) is a condition that causes chronic, debilitating fatigue. It continues for at least six months. The fatigue is not relieved by bed rest. People who have CFS perform at a significantly lower level compared to their activity prior to the onset of the illness.



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Causes

The cause of CFS is unknown. Some believe there may be a link between CFS and stress, the immune system, toxins, the central nervous system, or activation of latent virus.

Risk Factors

Women are more likely to have CFS than men. It is also more common in people between 25-55 years of age.

Symptoms

Symptoms vary from person to person. They include:

- Unexplained, new onset, persistent fatigue that is not relieved with bed rest and often worsens with physical or mental activity
- Unexplained muscle aches
- Joint pain without swelling or redness over six months
- Headaches over six months
- Trouble with short-term memory or concentration, a “brain fog”
- Forgetfulness or confusion
- Irritability, anxiety, panic attacks, mood swings, or depression
- Sore throat over six months
- Tender lymph nodes over six months
- Trouble sleeping or not feeling refreshed after sleep
- Visual disturbances (eyes sensitive to light, blurring, pain)
- Reduced activities (social, job-related, educational, and personal)
- Dizziness, balance problems, or fainting
- Chills and night sweats
- Allergies or sensitivities to foods, chemicals, odors, medications, or noise

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Diagnosis

The doctor will ask about your symptoms and medical history. A physical exam will be done. There are no specific diagnostic tests for CFS. Your doctor may do several other tests to rule out other conditions that can have similar symptoms.

The doctor will look for the following signs to determine if you have CFS:

- Severe, chronic fatigue for at least six months that is not due to another illness or medical cause, along with:
- At least four of the following symptoms according to the International Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Study Group Criteria:
 - Impairment of short-term memory or concentration
 - Sore throat
 - Tender lymph nodes
 - Muscle pain
 - Joint pain without swelling or redness
 - Headaches of a new type, severity, or pattern
 - Unrefreshing sleep
 - Prolonged fatigue lasting 24 hours or more after exercise

Treatment

The main goal of CFS treatment is to achieve symptom relief.

A physical therapist will work with you to create an individualized exercise program that focuses on interval activity or graded exercise. The goal is to balance rest and activity to avoid both deconditioning from lack of activity and flare-ups of illness due to overexertion. Effective activity management may help improve mood, sleep, pain, and other symptoms so patients can function better and engage in activities of daily living. Your program may include:

- Light to low impact activities
- Strength and conditioning exercises
- Graded exercises
- Therapeutic massage
- Stretching to improve flexibility and range of motion
- Learning modified ways to complete daily tasks

Prevention

There are no guidelines for preventing CFS because the cause is unknown.