



Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME

What is it?

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) is a long-term illness with a wide range of symptoms. The most common symptom is extreme tiredness. CFS is also known as ME, which stands for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis. CFS/ME can affect anyone, including children. It's more common in women and tends to develop between your mid-20s and mid-40s.

Diagnosing CFS/ME

There isn't a specific test for CFS/ME, so it's diagnosed based on your symptoms and by ruling out other conditions that could be causing your symptoms. Your GP will ask about your symptoms and medical history. You may also have blood and urine tests.

Living with CFS/ME

Living with CFS/ME can be difficult. Extreme tiredness and other physical symptoms can make it hard to carry out everyday activities. You may have to make some major lifestyle changes. CFS/ME can also affect your mental and emotional health and have a negative effect on your self-esteem.

Stress and CFS/ME

"The cause of CFS has not yet been found, but research confirms that an imbalance in the normal interactions of the body systems that controls stress can be one of the things leading to CFS."

Causes of CFS/ME.

It's not known what causes CFS/ME, but there are several theories – for example, it may be triggered by an infection, or certain factors could make you more likely to develop the illness. Suggested causes or triggers for CFS/ME include:

- viral infections, such as glandular fever
- bacterial infections, such as pneumonia
- problems with the immune system
- a hormone imbalance
- mental health problems, such as stress, depression and emotional trauma
- your genes – CFS/ME seems to be more common in some families

What are the Symptoms?

- Sleep problems
- Muscle or joint pain
- Headaches
- Problems thinking, remembering or concentrating
- Flu-like symptoms
- Feeling dizzy or sick
- Fast or irregular heartbeats

Treatment Options.

Treatment for CFS/ME aims to relieve the symptoms. Your treatment will depend on how CFS/ME is affecting you. Treatments include:

- cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
- a structured exercise programme called graded exercise therapy (GET)
- medication to control pain, nausea and sleeping problems

Did you know?

Most people with CFS get better over time, although some people don't make a full recovery. It's also likely there will be periods when your symptoms get better or worse.

Stay Alert, Stay Safe

[Find out more on Yammer or the Fatigue Reduction site](#)

