

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

What is chronic fatigue syndrome?

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) is a disorder that causes you to be very tired. It does not go away with rest. People with CFS may have other symptoms, such as poor sleep, trouble with remembering things, pain, sore throat, tender lymph nodes, or headaches. Not everyone with CFS has all of these symptoms.

What causes it?

No one is sure exactly what causes CFS. Immune system problems may cause it. Childhood trauma (for example, physical or sexual abuse) may raise the risk of getting it.

How can my doctor tell if I have it?

You can be diagnosed with CFS only if other diseases have been ruled out. Your doctor may want to do blood or urine tests, or tests for other diseases based on your symptoms.

How is it treated?

Two treatments can help with CFS: cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) and graded exercise therapy. With CBT, a therapist teaches you

about how your thinking affects how you feel and act. With graded exercise therapy, you slowly increase your physical activity, which hopefully increases your function.

Be sure to tell your doctor about other problems that you are having, such as depression, pain, and trouble sleeping. Your doctor will want to treat these problems too.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

AAFP's Patient Education Resource

Web site: <http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/en/diseases-conditions/chronic-fatigue-syndrome.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/cfs/index.html>

CFIDS Association of America

Web site: <http://www.cfids.org>

October 2012

This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.

This information provides a general overview and may not apply to everyone. Talk to your family doctor to find out if this information applies to you and to get more information on this subject. Copyright © 2012 American Academy of Family Physicians. Individuals may photocopy this material for their own personal reference, and physicians may photocopy for use with their own patients. Written permission is required for all other uses, including electronic uses.



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS