

# CHRONIC FATIGUE

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) is a condition that causes fatigue severe enough to interfere with a person's ability to participate in normal work, recreation, or social activities. Fatigue caused by CFS does not improve substantially with rest.

In addition to fatigue, people with CFS have symptoms that may include sleep problems, a decreased ability to think clearly and concentrate, memory problems, fever, headaches, muscle and joint pain, sore throat, and tender glands in the neck or armpits. Normal activity and light exertion are often exhausting for a person with CFS and may make symptoms worse.

People used to believe that chronic fatigue syndrome was just a symptom of depression and that the symptoms were "all in your head." Most experts now agree that chronic fatigue syndrome is a distinct physical disease with physical symptoms. Although poorly understood, CFS is quite real and can be disabling for many people who have it.

## Cause

Although the cause of chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) is unknown, some people appear to develop CFS after having a viral or bacterial infection. Nevertheless, there is no evidence to support a clear cause-and-effect relationship between infectious diseases and CFS.

Other theories about the possible cause of CFS point to disorders that affect the body's natural defense system (immune system) and to abnormalities of the hormonal (endocrine) system. There is evidence indicating that CFS involves the nervous system as well.

## What Happens

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) may develop without warning in a person who has not been sick. In some cases it develops after a viral illness, such as mononucleosis (mono) or influenza (flu), or after a period of unusual stress.

The fatigue may develop gradually or quite suddenly. Because fatigue can be vague and can be caused by many factors, people may not pay attention to the problem for several weeks or months.

## Treatment Overview

Treatment for chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) focuses first on ruling out potential causes. If these are found we treat the cause. If a specific cause is not discovered, we focus on strengthening the patients immune system, detoxification pathways and general nutritional status.

We have found that this comprehensive approach will almost inevitably result in significant improvements in the health status of our patients.