



## Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS)

### Fact:

CFS usually strikes individuals, but there have been outbreaks of many cases in one area.

### Fiction:

CFS has no known cause, so there is no known prevention.

### Prevention:

A range of therapies can help manage symptoms.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome may be the diagnosis if one has suffered at least six months of fatigue (feeling extremely tired) that has no other explanation.

## Understanding CFS

CFS often strikes suddenly after an infection or physical or psychological trauma. It can follow Lyme disease or infectious mononucleosis. While the cause is unknown, CFS may be linked to low blood pressure caused by a nervous system problem.

## Who Has CFS?

CFS affects 4 to 20 of every 100,000 Americans over age 18, with women afflicted twice as often as men. It is most common in ages 25 to 45.\*

Usually cases are isolated, but at least 30 outbreaks have affected large numbers of people in the same area.

## Symptoms of CFS

Most common symptoms include unexplained fatigue that rest does not relieve. Symptoms include:

- Impaired concentration and short term memory that interfere with routine activities
- Sore throat
- Swollen glands in the neck or underarm area
- Muscle pain
- Pain in several joints with no redness or swelling
- A change in headaches—new type of pain, new pattern, or greater severity
- Sleep that doesn't refresh—not feeling rested upon waking
- An extreme reaction to exertion—sick for 24 hours or more after exercise or other strenuous activity

The majority of people also have some type of mental illness, most commonly depression, and many have severe allergy symptoms. Many other illnesses cause similar symptoms, so a doctor may conduct tests to rule out other explanations for exhaustion. Symptoms tend to be worst for the first one to two years, but may persist for years.\*

## Prevention

The cause of CFS remains unknown, so there's no way to prevent it.

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## Treatment

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A combination of treatments may help improve the patient's symptoms:

- Slow down and reduce stress; conserve energy for essential activities
- Resume exercise slowly
- Treat psychiatric conditions
- Treat pain
- Treat allergy symptoms

\* IntelliHealth

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