

## CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME (CFS)

**A person with CFS feels completely worn-out and overtired. This extreme tiredness makes it hard to do the daily tasks that most of us do without thinking — like dressing, bathing, or eating. Sleep or rest does not make the tiredness go away. It can be made worse by moving, exercising, or even thinking.**

- CFS can happen over time or come on suddenly. People who get CFS over time get more and more tired over weeks or months. The extreme tiredness must go on for at least 6 months before a diagnosis of CFS can be made.
- No one knows for sure what causes CFS. Many people with CFS say it started after an infection, such as a cold or stomach bug. It also can follow infection with the Epstein-Barr virus. Some people with CFS say it started after a time of great stress.
- Experts think at least one million Americans have CFS. Fewer than 20 percent of these cases have been diagnosed, however.
- Women are four times as likely as men to develop CFS. The illness occurs most often in people ages 40 – 59. CFS is less common in children than in adults.
- It can be hard for your doctor to diagnose CFS because there is no lab test for it. If you think you may have CFS, see your doctor. The main symptoms include:
  - Feeling very tired for more than a day (24 hours) after physical or mental exercise
  - Forgetting things or having a hard time focusing
  - Feeling tired even after sleeping
  - Muscle pain or aches
  - Pain or aches in joints without swelling or redness
  - Headaches of a new type, pattern, or strength
  - Tender lymph nodes in the neck or under the arm
  - Sore throat

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 24-Hour Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Voice Information System**

Internet Address: <http://www.cdc.gov/cfs/>

**Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Advisory Committee (CFSAC)**

Phone Number: (202) 690-7650

Internet Address: <http://www.hhs.gov/advcomcfs>

**Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction Syndrome Association of America**

Phone Number: (704) 365-2343

Internet Address: <http://www.cfids.org>

**National CFIDS Foundation**

Phone Number: (781) 449-3535

Internet Address: <http://www.ncf-net.org>

**The Trans-NIH Working Group on Chronic Fatigue Syndrome**

Phone Number: (301) 402-1770

Internet Address: <http://orwh.od.nih.gov/cfs.html>

**International Association for CFS/ME**

Phone Number: (847) 258-7248

Internet Address: <http://www.iacfsme.org/>

**National Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia Association**

Phone Number: (816) 737-1343

Internet Address: <http://www.ncfsfa.org/>

**For an in-depth look at chronic fatigue syndrome, visit [womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov) at <http://www.womenshealth.gov/faq/chronic-fatigue-syndrome.cfm>.**



**womenshealth.gov**

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