Chronic fatigue syndrome
Also called: CFS, myalgic encephalomyelitis

A disease characterised by profound fatigue, sleep abnormalities, pain and other symptoms that are made worse by exertion.

- Treatment can help, but this condition can't be cured
- Chronic: can last for years or be lifelong
- Requires a medical diagnosis
- Lab tests or imaging always required

Chronic fatigue syndrome occurs more commonly in women. The cause of this condition is unknown, but may include environmental or genetic factors.

The main symptom is fatigue for over six months. The fatigue often worsens with activity, but doesn't improve with rest.

Treatments include graded exercise therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy. Other medication or therapies may provide symptom relief.

Symptoms

Requires a medical diagnosis

The main symptom is fatigue for over six months. The fatigue often worsens with activity, but doesn't improve with rest.

People may experience:

- **Pain areas**: in the joints or muscles
- **Whole body**: fatigue, inability to exercise, or malaise
- **Cognitive**: confusion, forgetfulness, or lack of concentration
- **Sleep**: excess sleepiness or sleep disturbances
- **Mood**: anxiety or apprehension
- **Also common**: depression, headache, muscle weakness, sensitivity to pain, or sore throat

Treatments

Treatment consists of self care

Treatments include graded exercise therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy. Other medication or therapies may provide symptom relief.

Self-care

- **Stress management**: Pursuing an enjoyable activity or verbalising frustration to reduce stress and improve mental health.
- **Relaxation techniques**: Deep breathing, meditation, yoga, rhythmic exercise and other activities that reduce symptoms of stress


11 September 2017 Page 2 of 2
Therapies

Support group: A forum for counseling and sharing experiences among people with a similar condition or goal, such as depression or weight loss.

Cognitive behavioral therapy: A talk therapy focused on modifying negative thoughts, behaviours and emotional responses associated with psychological distress.

Graded exercise therapy: Physical exercise that starts very slowly and gradually increases over time.

Medications

Antidepressant: Prevents or relieves depression and elevates mood.

Specialists

General Practitioner (GP): Prevents, diagnoses and treats diseases.

Clinical Psychologist: Treats mental disorders primarily with talk therapy.

Psychiatrist: Treats mental disorders primarily with medications.

Consult a doctor for medical advice

Note: The information you see describes what usually happens with a medical condition, but doesn't apply to everyone. This information isn't medical advice, so make sure that you contact a health care provider if you have a medical problem. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor or a emergency number immediately.

Sources: Mayo Clinic and others. Learn more