

Department of Veterans Affairs



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Chronic Fatigue & Related Pain Syndromes

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome - Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction Syndrome

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) also called Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction Syndrome (CFIDS) is a complex of possibly related symptoms that may have several causes. The syndrome is not well understood. The main symptom is overwhelming fatigue that lasts for at least 6 months and interferes with daily living.

How Does it Occur?

Causes or factors that may contribute to chronic fatigue symptoms include:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Allergies
- Infections associated with a mild encephalitis, such as Epstein-Barr virus, infectious mononucleosis, Lyme disease, and AIDS
- Immunologic problems
- Tumors
- Rheumatic diseases
- Certain neurological disorders
- Severe anemia
- Metabolic or hormonal changes, such as with hypothyroidism, diabetes mellitus, and low pituitary gland hormone production
- Medications, such as drugs used to treat anxiety, depression, and hypertension (high blood pressure)

What are the Symptoms?

Physical symptoms of CFS may include:

- ☒ Overwhelming exhaustion, fatigue, or weakness that lasts longer than 6 months
- ☒ Low-grade fever
- ☒ Sore throat
- ☒ Chills and night sweats
- ☒ Swollen or tender lymph nodes
- ☒ Muscle weakness, aches, and pain
- ☒ Headache
- ☒ Joint aches and pain
- ☒ Allergic reactions
- ☒ Weight change (either gain or loss)
- ☒ Skin rash
- ☒ Inability to exercise

Psychological symptoms of CFS may include:

- ☒ Confusion and disorientation
- ☒ Memory loss
- ☒ Sleep disturbances
- ☒ Dizziness or lightheadedness
- ☒ Anxiety
- ☒ Irritability
- ☒ Difficulty in concentrating
- ☒ Apathy and depression
- ☒ Personality changes
- ☒ Mood swings
- ☒ Reduced sex drive

Fibromyalgia & Myofascial Pain Syndrome

Fibromyalgia (FMS) is a syndrome of widespread pain involving mainly muscles, but also tendons, ligaments, bursa and joints. The pain is generalized, but distinct areas of tenderness in specific locations are characteristic.

Myofascial Pain Syndrome is a more localized, possibly related condition, with muscle trauma being the common cause. It can also develop into a more generalized state, similar to FMS.

How Does it Occur?

- ◆ Physical Trauma
- ◆ Emotional Trauma
- ◆ Flu or other viral illness
- ◆ Nonviral infections
- ◆ Sudden hormonal changes
- ◆ Hypothyroidism
- ◆ Extended disruption of sleep

What are the Symptoms?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">☒ Muscle pain☒ Joint pain☒ Sleep disturbance☒ Headaches☒ Irritable Bladder☒ Raynaud's Phenomenon | <ul style="list-style-type: none">☒ Subjective swelling☒ Tender points☒ Neurological symptoms☒ Irritable bowel syndrome☒ Morning stiffness☒ Memory problems |
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Symptoms & Syndromes that may be Linked to FMS.

Neurological

- Paresthesia: numbness or tingling
- Headaches: tension and migraine
- Neurogenic inflammation: inflammatory sensations (rashes, itching, inflammation).
- Cognitive: difficulty with concentration & short-term memory

Cardiac-Pulmonary

- Mitral valve prolapse.
- Heart palpitations.
- Non-cardiac chest pain (Costochondritis).
- Abnormal smooth muscle tone in muscles surrounding the bronchi of the lungs.

Genitourinary

- Painful menstruation.
- Increased urinary frequency & urgency.
- Increased incidence of interstitial cystitis.
- Vulvar vestibulitis: painful vulvar region and painful sexual intercourse.

Sensory

- Auditory: Low frequency, sensorineural hearing loss; decreased painful sound threshold.
- Vestibular: exaggerated nystagmus (rapid movement of the eyeball); dizziness, vertigo.
- Ocular: impaired function of focus & tracking of the eyes.

Gastrointestinal

- Heartburn (GERD).
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).
- Esophageal dysmotility.

Miscellaneous

- Joint hypermobility.
- Temporomandibular Joint Disorder (TMJ)
- Plantar arch or heel pain.

How Do I Get Help Or More Information?

See your doctor if you feel that you may have one of these medical syndromes.

Veterans Service Representatives are available to discuss this or any veterans' issue with you.

Veterans Service Representatives are available to discuss claims or any veterans' issues with you. Call your closest office for the nearest location to you:

Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Victorville: (760) 843-2790 San Bernardino: (909) 387-5516 Chino: (909) 465-5241

Part time offices in: Barstow, Yucca Valley and 29 Palms.