



Veterans Affairs

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Director

Fact Sheet #11
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CHRONIC FATIGUE AND 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 set of possibly related symptoms that may have several causes. 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 pressures)

What are the Symptoms?

Physical symptoms of CFS may include: Psychological symptoms of CFS may include:

- Overwhelming exhaustion, fatigue, or weakness that lasts longer than 6 months
- Confusion and disorientation
- Memory loss
- Low-grade fever
- Sleep disturbances
- Sore throat
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Chills and night sweats
- Anxiety
- Swollen or tender lymph nodes
- Irritability
- Muscle weakness, aches, and pain
- Difficulty in concentrating
- Headache
- Apathy and depression
- Joint aches and pain
- Personality changes
- Allergic reactions
- Mood swings
- Weight change (either gain or loss)
- Reduced sex drive
- Skin rash
- Inability to exercise

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?

- Muscle pain
- Subjective swelling
- Joint pain
- Tender points
- Sleep disturbance
- Neurological symptoms
- Headaches
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Irritable Bladder
- Morning stiffness
- Raynaud's Phenomenon
- Memory problems

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

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.

Cardiac-Pulmonary

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

Gastrointestinal

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

Genitourinary

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

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.

Veterans Affairs Office Locations:

- 222 W. Hospitality Lane, Third Floor, San Bernardino, CA 92415-0470 (909) 382-3290
- 15900 Smoke Tree Street, Hesperia, CA 92345 (760) 995-8010
- 8575 Haven Ave., Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730 (909-948-6470
- **Or call Toll Free from anywhere in San Bernardino County : 1-866-4SB-Vets (1-866-472-8387)**