

Some common symptoms of CFS/ME

SYMPTOM	DO'S/DON'TS	WHAT/WHO MIGHT HELP
<p>Sleeping problems such as difficulty getting to sleep or waking at night or feeling sleepy during the day and then not sleeping at night.</p>	<p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ try to get up at the same time each day. ▪ try relaxation techniques or warm baths and milky drinks before bed. <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ get up at different times each day. ▪ sleep during the day if possible. ▪ use the computer or watch TV at night as flickering screens keep the brain alert. ▪ lie in bed worrying about not getting to sleep if possible. 	<p>If the simple things don't help tell your doctor about your problems sleeping. Keeping a record of your sleep problems in your diary will help your doctor to understand.</p> <p>There are some medicines which might help or they might suggest a psychologist who can teach you relaxation techniques to use to help you get to sleep.</p>
<p>Problems Eating You might feel too tired to eat, or feel sick and have a tummy ache. You may not feel hungry or thirsty, or find your food does not taste nice.</p>	<p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ try to eat healthily. If you can't eat three big meals, try eating little and often. <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ stop eating. Your body needs good food to make energy and rebuild your body. ▪ try any extreme diets which exclude certain foods unless you have been advised to because of an allergy. 	<p>Tell your doctor – they may suggest you talk a dietician who can give you advice, and check that what you are eating provides you with everything you need.</p> <p>You could keep a diary of what you eat which helps to see if your diet is healthy.</p>
<p>Problems Walking Some people find walking extremely exhausting and have problems with balancing. Dizziness can be a problem when standing.</p>	<p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ work out how far you can easily walk and increase very slowly. ▪ if your walking is bad, consider using a wheelchair. <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ keep on walking until you're too tired to go further. 	<p>A physiotherapist might give you exercises to keep your muscles working properly. Write down what you can do in a diary.</p> <p>Your doctor may be able to help you borrow a wheelchair to use until you feel a little better.</p>
<p>Pain Especially headaches and muscle pain.</p>	<p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ tell other people about the pain you are in– especially your doctor. <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ keep it to yourself, or be angry with others for not realising you are in pain. 	<p>Your doctor will be able to suggest some simple things that may help with pain, for example using ice or heat packs. There are also various medicines your doctor might suggest. If the medicine doesn't work, don't feel bad about going back and asking your doctor to try something else.</p>

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<p>Difficulty doing mental activities</p> <p>You may have problems reading or your words come out in the wrong order when speaking or writing, or you can no longer do maths problems that used to be easy.</p>	<p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ try to do some mental work each day, in tiny chunks of time. ▪ if you can't manage books, read magazines, or do simple puzzles rather than school work. <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ think you are going mad, or becoming stupid. This is part of the illness and will go away. ▪ worry about school and exams – you can catch up when you are better. 	<p>Tell your teachers, parents and doctors how the illness is affecting you, so they can plan how to best help. A meeting between the school and your doctor can be helpful to plan your school work.</p> <p>They may suggest learning from home, cutting down on the number of subjects or even stopping studying for a while.</p> <p>If you want to take exams, special arrangements can be made and AYME can give you advice on this.</p>
<p>Anxiety and Worry- People with CFS/ME often worry about how long they will be ill and how they will catch up on missed schoolwork. But worrying can give you tummy ache, headaches, and make it difficult to get to sleep.</p>	<p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ try and help yourself stay relaxed–listen to nice music, soak in a warm bath, think of all the pleasant things you will do when you are better. <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ keep your worries to yourself- talking about them to someone else can make it feel less of a problem. 	<p>Talk to your doctor about any stresses you may be under e.g. schoolwork.</p> <p>If you find you are feeling really tense a lot of the time, then a counsellor might help – they can also teach you relaxation techniques that might help.</p>
<p>Depression It is quite natural to feel down in the dumps when you are ill. But if you feel really sad, all of the time, and can't imagine getting better, then you might be suffering from depression.</p>	<p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ remember you won't feel like this forever. ▪ find someone to talk to and get help if you need it. <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ feel ashamed – feeling low could be a result of being ill or could also be how the illness affects your body. 	<p>Tell your doctor how you are feeling. Talking can help, so they might suggest you see a counsellor, psychologist or psychiatrist. This does not mean that your doctor doesn't believe you are ill – children with other illness such as diabetes are also helped by seeing a psychologist. Your doctor can also prescribe medicines that might help.</p>
<p>Other symptoms These are less common but might include feeling hot and cold, being sensitive to noise and light, or sore throat and painful glands.</p>	<p>DO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ remember that CFS/ME can cause different symptoms in different people. <p>DON'T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ panic and think new symptoms mean you are getting worse. 	<p>Tell your doctor about any new symptom or any symptom that is getting worse. They may want to do a few more tests or refer you to a specialist who can help treat your symptom.</p>