

ME/CFS MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS

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This is not a complete list of symptoms but those most commonly experienced in CFS/ME.

GENERAL SYMPTOMS

Fatigue, worsened by physical exertion or stress

Activity level decreased to less than 50% of pre-illness activity level

Symptoms worsened by stress (physical, emotional and/or cognitive)

Shortness of breath with little or no exertion

Recurrent flu-like illness (usually predominant in early stages of illness although some patients continue to have frequent infections)

Sore throat; hoarseness

Tender or swollen lymph nodes (glands)

Low-grade fevers

Night sweats

Severe nasal allergies (new or worsened)

Feeling cold often or feeling hot often

Cold extremities (hands and feet)

Low body temperature (below 97.6)

Low blood pressure (below 110/70)

Heart palpitations

Dryness of eyes and/or mouth

Increased thirst

Symptoms worsened by temperature changes

PAIN

Headache

Tender points or trigger points

Muscle pain

Muscle weakness

Joint pain

Chest pain

EYES AND VISION

Eye pain

Changes in visual acuity (ability to see well)

Difficulty with accommodation (switching focus from one thing to another)

SENSITIVITIES

Sensitivities to medications (unable to tolerate a "normal" dosage)

Sensitivities to odors (e.g., cleaning products, exhaust fumes, colognes, hairsprays)

Sensitivities to foods

Sensitivities to chemicals: petrochemicals, cleaning products, fragrances, etc.

Alcohol intolerance

Alteration of taste, smell, and/or hearing

UROGENITAL

Frequent urination

Painful urination or bladder pain

Decreased libido (sex drive)

Pain in prostate (males) or vulva (females)

GASTROINTESTINAL

Stomach ache; abdominal cramps

Nausea; vomiting

Esophageal reflux (heartburn)

Frequent diarrhea

Frequent constipation

Bloating; intestinal gas

Weight gain or loss

OTHER

Rashes or sores

Hair loss

Increased dental and periodontal problems

NEUROLOGICAL

Lightheadedness; feeling "spacey"

Inability to think clearly ("brain fog")

Feeling spatially disoriented

Dysequilibrium (balance difficulty)

Seizures or seizure-like episodes

Syncope (fainting) or blackouts or pre-syncope

Vertigo or dizziness

Photophobia (light sensitivity)

Numbness or tingling sensations

Tinnitus (ringing in one or both ears)

Noise intolerance

Clumsiness; frequently dropping things

Perceptual problems, e.g., difficulty judging distances (e.g. when driving; placing objects on surfaces)

Sensory overload phenomenon: overwhelmed by noise, odors, visual input movement in environment

SLEEP DISORDER

Hypersomnia, often alternating with hyposomnia (sleeping too much or too little)

Sleep disturbance:

unrefreshing or non-restorative sleep
difficulty falling asleep
difficulty staying asleep (awakenings)
vivid or disturbing dreams or nightmares

Altered sleep/wake schedule (alertness/energy best late at night)

Sleep disorders, e.g., apnea, leg movement disorders

COGNITIVE

Difficulty with simple calculations

Word-finding difficulty, e.g., remembering names of people or objects

Saying the wrong word

Concentration impairment

Easy distractibility

Difficulty following a conversation when background noise is present

Losing your train of thought in the middle of a sentence

Difficulty putting tasks or things in proper sequence

Memory impairment, especially short-term memory

Forgetting how to do routine things

Comprehension difficulty

Transposition (reversal) of numbers, words and/or letters when you speak or write

Difficulty recognizing faces

Difficulty making decisions

Poor judgment

Difficulty following instructions:
simple or complicated
written or spoken

Difficulty integrating information (putting ideas together to form a concept)

Difficulty following directions while driving

Becoming lost in familiar locations when driving

Feeling too disoriented to drive

MOOD/EMOTIONS

Depressed mood (feeling hopeless, helpless)

Anxiety with no obvious cause

Suicidal thoughts; suicide attempt(s)

Feeling worthless

Frequent crying

Appetite change: Increased or decreased

Irritability; overreaction

Abrupt, unpredictable mood swings

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