

Do you have these symptoms?



DEBILITATING FATIGUE:
Chronic exhaustion that is not relieved by rest.



POST-EXERTIONAL MALAISE:
Feeling worse after physical or mental activity.



UNREFRESHING SLEEP:
Sleeping too much or too little.



PROBLEMS THINKING CLEARLY:
Brain fog, confusion,
difficulty with word-finding.

If you have these symptoms, see your GP

ME/CFS:

- Impacts at least 250,000 adults and children in the UK.
- Is a complex, chronic medical condition affecting multiple body systems.
 - Is similar to Long Covid but has existed for a very long time.
- Is a fluctuating condition where symptoms can change unpredictably.
- Can be worsened by particular triggers, e.g. physical or mental activity or infections.
 - Can be self-managed with support and advice from specialists.
- Can involve flare-ups and relapses even if symptoms are well managed.
 - Affects everyone differently and its impact varies widely.

ME/CFS is suspected if:

- You have had all 4 of the persistent symptoms (see cover) for a minimum of 6 weeks (Adults) or 4 weeks (Children), and...
- Your ability to engage in occupational, educational, social or personal activities is significantly reduced from pre-illness levels, and...
- Your symptoms are not explained by another condition.

Other Symptoms

These may also be associated with, but not exclusive to, ME/CFS:



Dizziness, palpitations, fainting, nausea.



Neuromuscular symptoms.



Intolerance to alcohol, or to certain foods and chemicals.



Pain.

Temperature hypersensitivity.



Flu-like symptoms.



Heightened sensory sensitivities.



Orthostatic intolerance/dysautonomia



Management Advice

A GP, paediatrician, or specialist who suspects ME/CFS should give personalised management advice.

You should also be advised:

- Not to use more energy than you perceive you have.
- To carefully manage daily activities and not 'push through' limitations.
- To rest and convalesce as required.
- To maintain a healthy balanced diet with adequate fluid intake.

Diagnosing ME/CFS

- A GP, paediatrician, or specialist can make a diagnosis if symptoms persist for 3 months and are not explained by another condition.
- A referral should then be made to an ME/CFS specialist service for the diagnosis to be confirmed and for a care and support plan to be developed.
- See our other **Recognise ME** leaflet, **ME/CFS Specialist Services and Management**, for more information.

ME/CFS Illness severities

ME/CFS has 4 levels of severity, ranging from Mild to Very Severe, but it is for most people a fluctuating condition. Those worst affected are in bed all day and dependent on care. They need help with personal hygiene and eating, and are very sensitive to sensory stimuli. Some may not be able to swallow and may need to be tube fed.

Healthcare professionals should consider seeking advice from an appropriate specialist if there is uncertainty about interpreting signs and symptoms.

For more information

Please make use of The ME Association resources



The ME Association publishes a wide range of literature that you can depend upon.

All our literature is free to download here:

<https://meassociation.org.uk/fdwc>

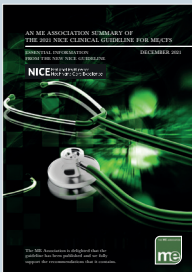


Diagnosing ME/CFS

This booklet explains why an early and accurate diagnosis is so important.

We examine core symptoms, clinical investigations and blood tests, and other explanations for persistent symptoms.

<https://meassociation.org.uk/mwta>



The information in this leaflet is based on the **NICE Guideline on ME/CFS** which provides evidence-based recommendations to the NHS and social care service providers. The ME Association has produced a summary booklet that you download free here:

<https://meassociation.org.uk/9d01>



Please note: While ME/CFS specialist services are available in England, there are limited services in Wales and no services in Northern Ireland or Scotland at the present time. If you cannot access a specialist service, then your GP should ensure you receive equivalent care and support based on the NICE Guideline.



The ME Association
We're here for you
meassociation.org.uk

