



A Symptom Checklist

If you have experienced the symptoms in the list below and these symptoms have persisted for at least six months, you should see your doctor. Research has shown that when these symptoms occur together it may indicate you have a disease called Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, also referred to as myalgic encephalomyelitis or ME/CFS.

- ✓ Extreme fatigue or exhaustion that has lasted for 6 or more consecutive months and is not due to ongoing exertion or other medical conditions (these other conditions need to be ruled out by your doctor after diagnostic tests have been conducted)
- ✓ Feeling physically drained and sick even after mild activity (e.g., walking up stairs)
- ✓ Minimum exercise makes you physically exhausted
- ✓ Feeling sore the next day after activities that are not strenuous (e.g., grocery shopping)
- ✓ Having a dead, heavy feeling after starting to exercise
- ✓ Even after a night of sleep you wake feeling unrefreshed, like you haven't slept at all
- ✓ Feeling mentally tired and exhausted after the slightest effort
- ✓ Slowness of thought
- ✓ Muscle weakness
- ✓ Difficulty finding the right word to say or expressing thoughts

If you are experiencing most or all of these symptoms you should see your doctor. Research has shown that the sooner a diagnosis is made, the better chance for effective treatment and recovery.

Don't Delay a Diagnosis

- Begin with your primary care provider. If you already have a good relationship with your provider and they are not familiar with ME/CFS, invite them to visit our resource page that has the most recent information on ME/CFS for healthcare professionals: <http://solvecfs.org/research/for-healthcare-providers/>
- You might also try the "Good Doctors" list on Co-Cure: <http://www.co-cure.org/Good-Doc.htm>.

(Note: Because ME/CFS is a diagnosis of exclusion and treatments are targeted at the symptoms, some healthcare providers may be reluctant to diagnosis and care for ME/CFS patients. Worst still is that some providers do not believe in the validity of ME/CFS. If you are met with skepticism by your healthcare provider, find another provider as quickly as possible.)

Preparing for your visit

Effective communication with your health care provider is important.

- Make the most of your office visit by coming prepared. Bring a list of symptoms you've experienced and how they've impacted your daily life. If you are taking several different types of medications, some may interact and make your ME/CFS symptoms worse – so bring a list of all the medications you are taking.
- Bring a list of questions you have and make sure you answer your provider's questions fully. To help ensure that you remember and fully understand any instructions given, consider bringing a friend or family member with you, write things down or even ask permission to record the visit.

About Solve ME/CFS Initiative

The Solve ME/CFS Initiative (SMCI) is one of the largest and most active charitable organization dedicated to myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME)/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS). We have directly funded or leveraged more than \$12 million in ME/CFS research studies in the past 5 years alone, all aimed at accelerating progress toward accurate diagnosis and effective treatment of ME/CFS. SMCI seeks to actively engage the ME/CFS community in research, works to accelerate the discovery of safe and effective treatments, and strives for an aggressive expansion of funding for research into treatments and a cure. Inspired by the courage and passion of patients and volunteers, and fueled by gifts small and large from supporters committed to this vision, SMCI leads with innovation, collaboration and integrity.