

# ME/CFS Symptoms List

## Neurological/Cognitive Symptoms

- Easily confused
- Slow information processing
- Difficulty retrieving words
- Occasional slurred speech
- Occasional dyslexia
- Difficulty with mathematics
- Easily distracted
- Forgetfulness (primarily short-term)
- Attention deficit
- Inability to focus vision and attention
- Inability to cope with fast-paced tasks
- Overall feeling of "spaciness" or "brainfog"

### Motor Disturbances:

- Loss of muscular coordination
- Muscle weakness
- Muscle twitching
- Loss of balance and clumsiness

### Overload phenomena:

- hypersensitivities to light, sound motion, odors
- Inability to block out background noise and focus on conversation
- Informational overload with inability to multi-task
- Motor overload, with staggering and weakness
- dizziness
- numbness
- tinnitus (ringing in the ears)
- nausea
- shooting pain
- Overload may cause temporary immobilization

## Immune Dysfunction

- A general ill or flu-like feeling, more frequent in the acute onset stage of the illness, less frequent in the chronic stages, most notably post-exertionally
- tender lymph nodes
- recurrent sore throat
- new food sensitivities
- new chemical sensitivities
- hyper-sensitivity to medications and their side-effects
- allergies

## Sleep Dysfunction

- frequent awakenings
- nightmares or agitated dreams
- non-restorative sleep
- variations in sleepiness and energy throughout the day
- hypersomnia (excessive sleeping)
- Restless legs syndrome
- periodic limb movement disorder (jerking or twitching during sleep)

## Pain

- generalized muscle pain
- new onset headaches
- aching, burning shooting pains anywhere in the body
- fibromyalgia is a common concurrent syndrome with ME/CFS
- arthralgia without joint swelling
- Veteran M.E. practitioners sometimes noted that pain is most frequent in the upper spine and neck area
- abdominal pain

## Post-Exertional Malaise and Fatigue

- Flu-like or hangover feeling following minimal physical or mental exertion, sometimes immediate, sometimes delayed several hours or a day or more and associated with immune activation, with sore throat, tender lymph glands, general malaise, increased pain and cognitive symptoms
- Feeling worse after exercise, rather than better
- Taking a prolonged time to return to pre-exertional function level
- Lack of endurance

## Autonomic Manifestations

### Orthostatic Intolerance:

- Neurally mediated hypotension (NMH) i.e. problems with regulation of blood pressure and pulse, especially when standing still; with symptoms of dizziness, lightheadedness, slow response to verbal stimuli; an urgency to lie down
- Postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS) i.e. Excessive heart rate during 10 minutes of standing still; blood pressure drop upon standing; lightheadedness, dizziness, nausea, fatigue, irregular breathing, visual changes sweating, headaches.
- Delayed postural hypotension i.e. blood pressure drop after many minutes of standing, rather than upon standing

### tilt table test abnormalities

### Other autonomic manifestations:

- Palpitations with or without cardiac arrhythmias
- 24-hour Holter monitor results with oscillating T-wave inversions and/or flat T-wave
- breathing dysregulation
- shortness of breath
- intestinal irregularities
- irritable bowel syndrome
- diarrhea
- constipation
- alternating diarrhea and constipation
- abdominal cramps
- bloating
- nausea
- anorexia
- urinary frequency
- painful urination
- excessive urination at night
- pain in lower abdomen

## Neuroendocrine Manifestations

- loss of thermostatic stability (fluctuations in body temperature; fluctuations of cold and hot in different parts of the body; intolerance to extremes in air temperature; low body temperature)
- night sweats or other sweating episodes
- weight change, with loss of appetite in some patients or abnormal weight gain in others
- worsening of symptoms under increased stress (physical or emotional)
- loss of adaptation to situations of overload
- anxiety