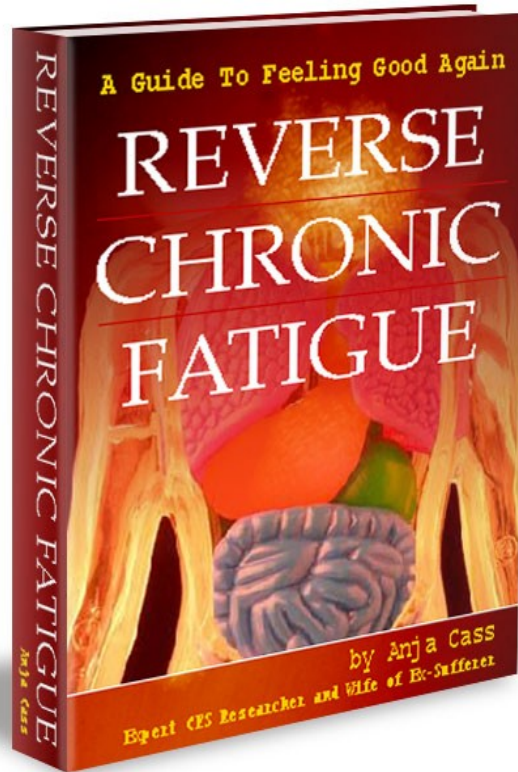


A Guide To Feeling Good Again

Reverse Chronic Fatigue



Written and Published by Anja Cass.
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WHAT IS CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME?

Both the Medical industry and Chronic Fatigue sufferers alike struggle to give Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) a boxed definition because of the many “possible” combinations of causes and varied degrees of symptoms experienced amongst sufferers.

As the debate to define Chronic Fatigue Syndrome continues, most medical practitioners and researchers base diagnosis on the American Center for Disease Control (CFD) definition compiled in 1994 by an international panel of CFS experts which states that a patient **must satisfy the following two criteria:**



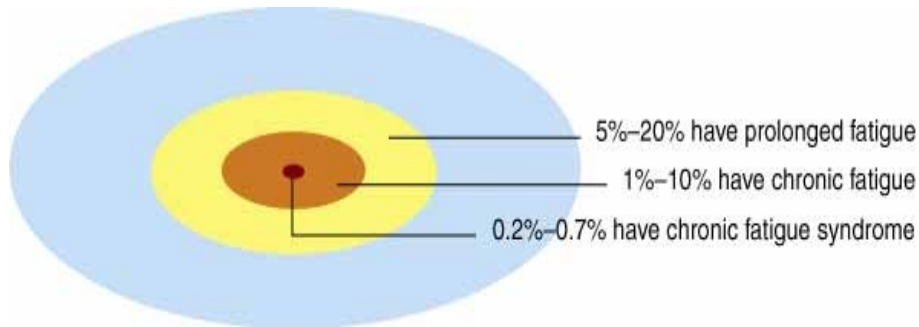
1. Have **severe chronic fatigue of six months or longer duration** with other known medical conditions excluded by clinical diagnosis; and
2. At the same time have **four or more of the following symptoms:**
 - substantial impairment in short-term memory or concentration
 - sore throat
 - tender lymph nodes
 - muscle pain
 - multi-joint pain without swelling or redness
 - headaches of a new type, pattern or severity
 - unrefreshed sleep
 - post exertion discomfort lasting more than 24 hours

The symptoms must have persisted or recurred during six or more consecutive months of illness and must not have predated the fatigue.

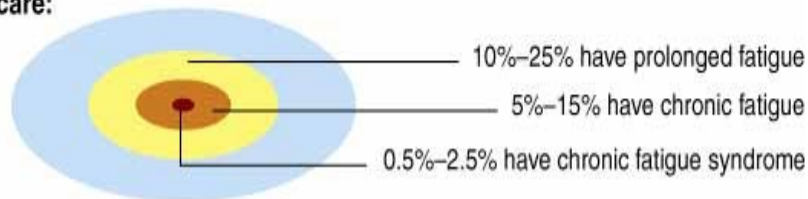
Patients that suffer from persistent fatigue are categorized according to the length and severity of their fatigue as follows:

Prolonged Fatigue → Chronic Fatigue → Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

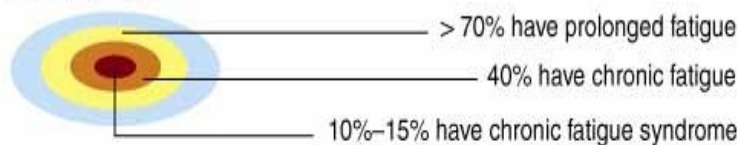
The prevalence of fatigue states:






Primary care:



Tertiary referrals for fatigue:



Definitions:

-  **Prolonged fatigue** — prolonged and disabling fatigue lasting at least one month.
-  **Chronic fatigue** — prolonged and disabling fatigue lasting at least six months.
-  **Chronic fatigue syndrome** — prolonged and disabling fatigue lasting at least six months, unexplained by other medical or psychological conditions.

(Diagram from the Medical Journal of Australia- CFS: Clinical Practice Guidelines 2002)

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Most people that suffer from CFS can be described as high achievers that often neglect sleep and diet to fit in a hectic daily schedule. They are natural *night* people and friends and family often describe them as:

Goal Orientated Perfectionists Workaholics

QUICK STATISTICS

Because CFS is not clearly defined and possibly underreported in men due to a lower tendency to seek medical assistance, statistics do tend to vary. However, these figures give a good general overview of cases presented to date.

- ▶ Approx. 4 adults per 1,000 in the United States are thought to have CFS
- ▶ Mainly adults between 40 and 59 years of age
- ▶ Less common in children and teenagers
- ▶ More often in women than men (between 15% - 40% men)
- ▶ Symptoms and disability the same for men and women
- ▶ Over 50% unable to work
- ▶ Almost 66% limited in their work
- ▶ More than 50% on disability benefits or temporary sick leave
- ▶ Less than 20% work full time
- ▶ Approx. 80% of cases are undiagnosed
- ▶ All ethnic and racial groups appear susceptible
- ▶ Lower income groups slightly more likely to develop CFS

Current research does not indicate that CFS is contagious. It has been found though that blood relatives of CFS sufferers are more susceptible to the illness - which may indicate a genetic link. However, more research is needed to confirm that family links really do play a role.

WHAT CAUSES CHRONIC FATIGUE?

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is a complex illness which seems to have a myriad of “possible” causes which lead to a variety of symptoms – and varying degrees of severity of symptoms.

However, research does indicate that genetic makeup can make a person more susceptible and that many sufferers lead highly active lifestyles prior to **a viral infection or a major life event** (such as the loss of a loved one) acting as a high level stress trigger that takes the body to an exhausting point of physical shut down.

While the medical community struggle to apply a definitive cause, it is generally agreed that there are two types of CFS:

- 1. Sudden onset; and**
- 2. Gradual onset**

SUDDEN ONSET

Most CFS victims get disabling fatigue symptoms very quickly and often after a cold or flu-like illness. While the traditional medical community has not been able to define a true cause of CFS, it appears that a bacterial or viral infection is often a common trigger amongst patients. Hence, medical practitioners sometimes label this as post-viral fatigue syndrome (PVFS).

GRADUAL ONSET

Gradual onset is a slower type of CFS which usually begins within a few months of the patient suffering from extreme levels of negative stress. This can be caused by physical trauma such as an operation or car crash, or emotional stress such as the death of a loved one.

CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME

SYMPTOMS:

The American Center for Disease Control defines CFS as “The presence of unexplained persistent fatigue that is not relieved by rest and that results in a substantial reduction **in occupational, social and personal activities.**”

The symptoms of CFS can be very disabling. While some sufferers can carry on with most day to day tasks, others are bed-bound and need a carer to look after them. In both cases, people with chronic fatigue syndrome will have a significant reduction in energy and activity levels than they did prior to the onset of CFS.

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

CFS sufferers have been found to experience unexplained exhaustion, as well as four or more of the following physical symptoms over a minimum six month period. Generally symptoms become worse with physical or mental activity.

- substantial impairment in short-term memory or concentration
- sore throat
- tender lymph nodes
- muscle pain
- multi-joint pain without swelling or redness
- headaches of a new type, pattern or severity
- unrefreshed sleep / insomnia
- post-exertion discomfort lasting more than 24 hours

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS

Most people that suffer from CFS don't exhibit any primary psychological symptoms. However, the ongoing fatigue and disabled lifestyle can lead to secondary symptoms such as irritability, frustration and feelings of depression.

ALTERNATIVE NAMES FOR CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME

The complexity and controversy of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is so widely spread that it even extends to the term itself. Since 1934 to the modern day, the term “Chronic Fatigue Syndrome” has been a global bone of contention.

A variety of names keep arising for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome because there are so many different views on the illness. Medical research keeps finding possible varying causes which range anywhere from infections to psychiatric disorder. No one single cause has been defined and this adds to the complexity of CFS.

COMMON ALTERNATIVE / RELATED NAMES:

Akureyri disease
Benign myalgic encephalomyelitis
Chronic fatigue immune dysfunction syndrome
Chronic infectious mononucleosis
Epidemic myalgic encephalomyelitis
Epidemic neuromyasthenia
Iceland disease
Myalgic encephalomyelitis
Myalgic encephalitis
Myalgic encephalopathy
Post-viral fatigue syndrome
Raphe nucleus encephalopathy
Royal Free disease
Tapanui flu
Yuppie flu

BRIEF CFS HISTORY TIMELINE:

1934 – Los Angeles County Hospital outbreak of **Poliomyelitis** mostly among nurses and doctors (resembled what is now called CFS)

1955 – London Royal Free Hospital outbreak of **Royal Free Disease & Benign Myalgic Encephalomyelitis** again mostly among nurses and doctors (resembled what is now called CFS)

1969 – Benign **Myalgic Encephalomyelitis** classified into International Classification of Diseases under Diseases of the nervous system.

1988 – The term **Chronic Fatigue Syndrome** is proposed in an article titled “Chronic fatigue syndrome: a working case definition”.

1996 – UK Royal Colleges of Physicians, Psychiatrists and General Practitioners recommend using the term **Chronic Fatigue Syndrome** instead of **Myalgic Encephalomyelitis** (met with a lot of mixed and heated debate)

2002 – Report from "Working Group on CFS/ME" acknowledges both names as a symbol of respect for different viewpoints and acknowledges continued lack of consensus on a universally acceptable name (and conclude that more research is needed)

2006 – Center for Disease Control (<http://www.cdc.gov/>) commenced a national program to educate the American public and health care professionals about **CFS**.

“FEEL GOOD AGAIN” ACTION PLAN:

Get ready – you are about to start the “Feel Good Again” Action Plan. While it may be tempting to skip certain parts of this plan, it is important that you follow it in the right order and be as strict as possible in each area of the plan.

This is the exact plan hundreds have followed to get back to their happy and healthy selves after months and years of suffering crippling CFS symptoms.

Like most CFS sufferers you are probably a head-strong person that does not like to do things by halves – you must apply this same attitude to the recovery plan if you truly want to get better.

Each part of the “feel good again” action plan will give you a whole variety of different things to try and do. It will require commitment and lifestyle changes.

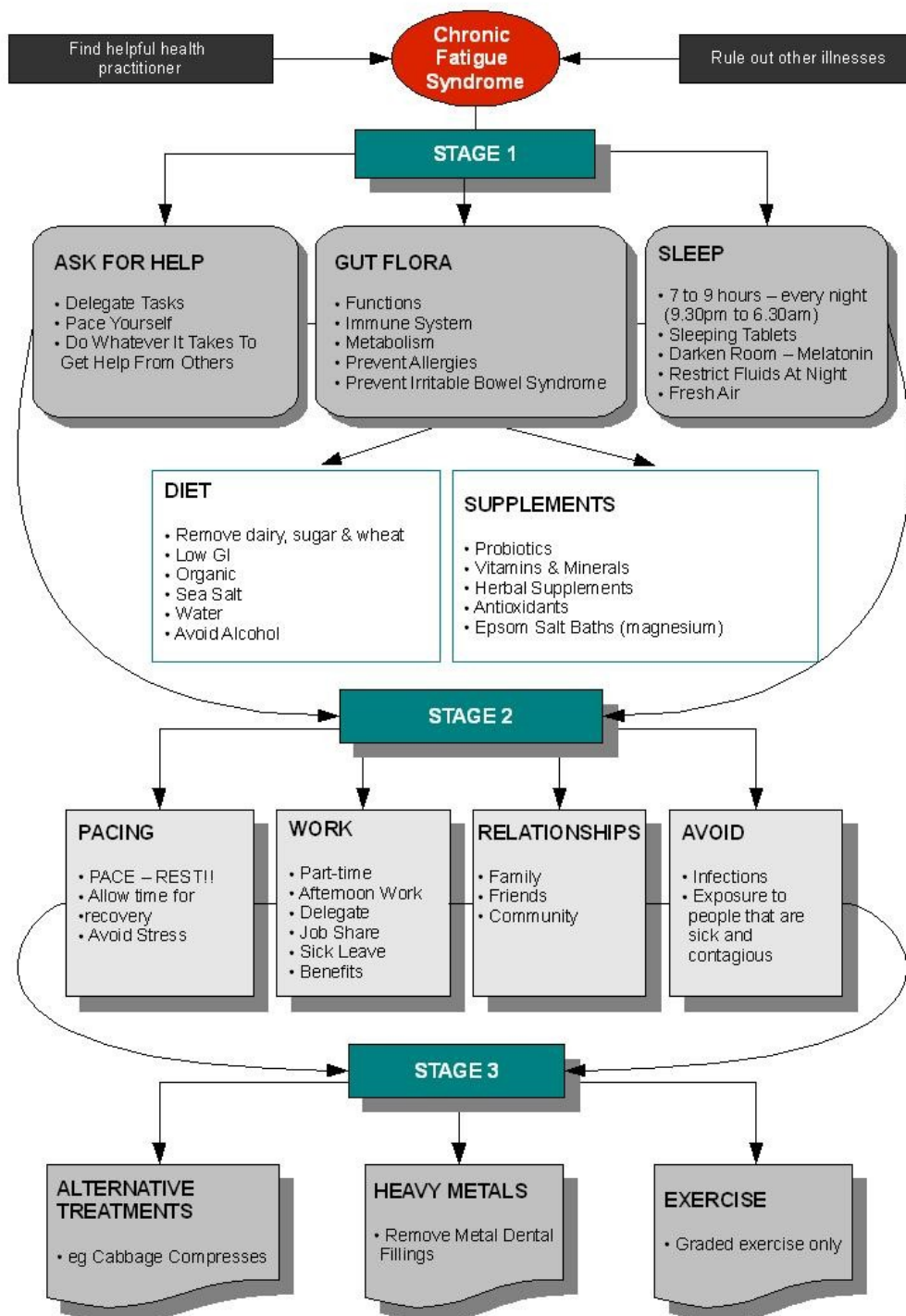
While stage 1 and 2 of the recovery plan do overlap, focus on getting stage 1 right first. Your Gut Flora and Sleep are the two most important things to get in order.

It is important that you follow this step-by-step plan in the order given... without the first stage in place, your body will not be ready to heal itself and get back on the road to recovery.

There is no set point at which you will see your biggest improvement – this changes from person to person due the level of symptoms and the degree of attack your body has gone through. Some people have reported massive improvements after changing their diet, others have had success once they reached the alternative treatments stage, while others have found that a combination of treatments such as vitamins and cabbage compresses have worked best for them.

Follow the plan to find the treatments that work best for you!

“FEEL GOOD AGAIN” ACTION PLAN:



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FIND A HELPFUL HEALTH PRACTITIONER:

Given the complexity and controversy which surrounds all aspects of CFS from its name right through to its causes, it is important to seek out a medical or alternative health practitioner that has experience with CFS.

Many sufferers are told over and over again that they do not have anything wrong with them (or are misdiagnosed)... only because their conventional doctor is not educated or experienced enough in the field of CFS. This can be very frustrating and add to the difficulty of trying to get better.

If you have not found a suitable conventional doctor to help you, keep looking until you find one. A good choice would be a GP that also specializes in alternative medicines.

While you will discover many treatments in this ebook, it will be extremely beneficial to you to have a good health practitioner on side to help you through your process of recovery.

One of the major benefits of finding a knowledgeable CFS practitioner is the that you will finally have the relief of knowing that this illness is REAL and that it is not just something in you head!

Like any expert in their profession, CFS specialists will know which tests to carry out in order to rule out other illnesses first. They will also be able to look at various other areas of your body to combine treatments and bring together a holistic plan to aid your road to recovery. Ask for referrals from local CFS support groups.

RULE OUT OTHER ILLNESSES:

It is very important that you do not self-diagnose Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. If you cannot find a doctor to help you, keep searching for alternative health practitioners or ask for CFS specialist referrals within your community. The important thing is to rule out any other possible illnesses first.

Some examples of illnesses that have similar or overlapping symptoms include:

Thyroid disorders – If your thyroid is not functioning properly it can make you feel anxious, tired, physically weak, and mentally drained. It can also cause weight loss or weight gain. It has also been reported to cause miscarriage and infertility.

Like CFS, Thyroid disorders present more often in women than in men and it is estimated that one in eight women will suffer from this at some point during their lifetime.

Anemia – This is a common blood disorder which occurs when your red blood cell count becomes too low. Healthy red blood cells carry oxygen through your body, and a low count can result in fatigue and stress on the organs.

Anemia is most often caused by a diet lacking in iron, but can have more severe causes such as infections, cancer or toxic exposure.

Diabetes – Diabetes is a chronic disease that can be managed if diagnosed. It occurs when your body's insulin can no longer be produced or is not produced in high enough amounts. A healthy body needs insulin to convert sugar into energy.

Like CFS sufferers, diabetics can experience such symptoms as increased fatigue, irritability and blurry vision.

Vitamin Deficiency – If your body is lacking in certain nutrients it can result in a number of symptoms including extreme fatigue. Some of the fatigue inhibiting nutrients you may be lacking include: potassium, chromium, copper, folic acid, iodine, iron, niacin, vitamin A, vitamin B6 and B12, and zinc.

Fibromyalgia (FM) – Sufferers of this illness experience extreme muscle pain, fatigue and disturbed sleep patterns. Like CFS it occurs mainly in women, but is also seen in children. It has a lot of the same debilitating effects as CFS and is often labeled as CFS due to its similar multi-faceted symptoms and seemingly undefinable causes.

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity – This illness usually lasts a long period of time and is reported to result from exposure to low levels of chemicals such as smoke, pesticides, plastics, synthetic fabrics, scented products, petroleum products and paints. The main symptoms of Multiple Chemical Sensitivity include many of the common CFS symptoms such as fatigue, substantial impairment in short-term memory, difficulty concentrating and muscle pain.

Hepatitis – Hepatitis is the inflammation of the liver and can be caused by such things as a virus, social drugs, toxins, and occasionally the breakdown of the immune system. Some of the common symptoms are muscle pain, fatigue and weakness.

Addison's Disease – The human body has two adrenal glands located above the kidneys. If these glands are unable to produce enough regulating hormones, the nervous system and immune system will not be able to properly help the body cope with stress, maintain blood pressure or regulate metabolism – resulting in symptoms such as muscle weakness, chronic worsening fatigue, low blood pressure and mental confusion.

Medications – Some medications can cause side effects that mimic CFS symptoms.

Antinuclear Antibody Test – This test is carried out to check your autoimmune processes. It tests for a number of diseases but no specific ones. If the test comes back positive, then further testing will be carried out to. Essentially anti-nuclear antibodies are antibodies against nuclear contents of cells. This means that you have generated an immune response against your own DNA and cannot fight off viruses, bacteria and germs.

Blood Sugar Levels – Blood glucose (blood sugar) levels are usually tested via blood and/or urine samples. These are useful in determining such illnesses as diabetes.

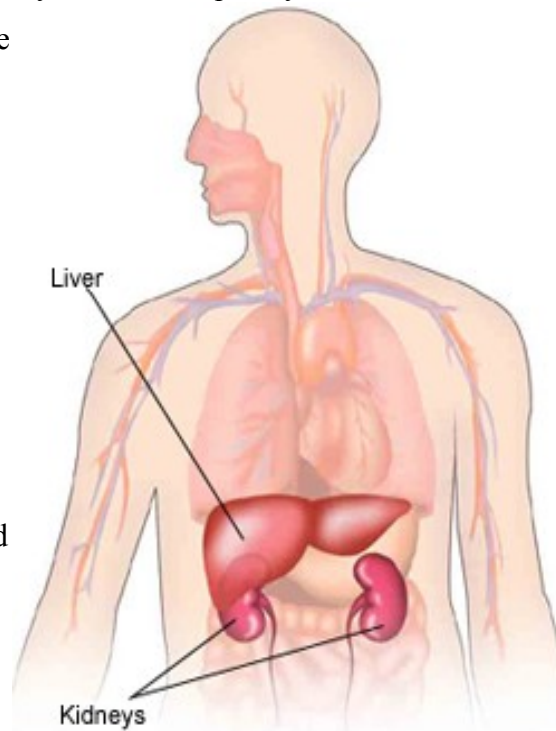
Calcium Levels – High levels of calcium inside cells can result in fatigue. This test is carried out to check how much calcium is circulating in the blood and to check for a variety of diseases relating to the bones, heart, nerves, kidneys, and teeth.

Coenzyme Q10 Levels – In the case of many chronic diseases, patients often have depleted levels of Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10). This naturally occurring antioxidant plays an important role in protecting all of the body's cells from free radicals. Particularly high levels are found at the mitochondria, where cellular energy is created and in major organs such as the heart. Depletion may also be caused by certain medications or an unbalanced diet. The levels of CoQ10 in your body will determine if oral supplements are needed and what dosage should be taken. While this is an over the counter supplement, it is quite expensive and has no effect if your CoQ10 levels are normal or if the wrong dosage is being taken for your levels.

Complete Blood Count (CBC) – Also known as a Full Blood Count (FBC), this test can help determine the cause of such things as fatigue, weakness, infection, inflammation, bruising, or bleeding by looking at white and red blood cells as well as platelets. An increase in white blood cell count can indicate infection, a decrease in Red Blood cell count highlights anemia and a low or very high platelet count may indicate excessive bleeding, clotting or bone diseases such as leukemia.

ESR and CRP Blood Tests – These tests are used to check for increased levels of protein in the blood. When you have an inflamed area in your body, extra protein is released into the bloodstream from that spot. While the ESR and CRP are only general tests, they do indicate if something is wrong so further testing can be carried out. ESR and CRP may highlight such things as infections, arthritis, connective tissue disorders, burns and heart failure.

Kidney Function Tests – These tests include a number of individual tests that measure how well your kidneys filter your blood and transport waste matter and excess water into the urine. If your kidneys do not adequately remove waste materials, then they can build up in the blood and gradually damage the body. The two most common causes of kidney disease are diabetes and high blood pressure. Other causes can include such things as injury and trauma, toxins, and medications.



Liver Function Tests – These tests analyze the condition of your liver and how well it is functioning. The liver carries out over 1,500 vital functions in the body including removal of toxins, processing food nutrients such as carbohydrates and protein and helping to regulate body metabolism.

Urinalysis (Urine Testing) – These tests allow for a broad range of areas to be tested at once. This can indicate if you have an infection or some type of kidney damage. It can also be used in conjunction with other tests to uncover such diseases as Rhabdomyolysis (muscle breakdown).



HELPFUL MEDICAL TESTS:

While there is no set test for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, the adrenal stress profile and the anti-cardiolipin antibodies test are two medical tests which can help to identify body illnesses, weaknesses and deficiencies at a micro level. So rather than looking at your overall wellbeing, these tests analyze the smaller, individual functions of the body to help identify areas which are not functioning correctly and thereby increasing your fatigue levels.

Adrenal Stress Profile – This test is designed to measure how well your adrenal glands are functioning. The adrenal glands support the immune system and nervous system to help regulate the effects of stress on your body. The more stress the adrenal glands are faced with, the more “tired” they become. This can result in a whole range of problems from low energy levels, high blood pressure, sleep disorders, digestive problems and much more. An adrenal stress profile usually involves a 24 hour saliva test.

Anti-Cardiolipin Antibodies Test – This test is usually carried out on patients that suffer such symptoms as pain and swelling of the limbs, shortness of breath or headaches. It determines the levels of your cardiolipin which is responsible for regulating your blood and preventing blood clots. If cardiolipin antibodies are found, then the test is sometimes repeated about 6 weeks later to see if the antibodies are episodic or not. Episodic (or temporary) antibodies may be present due to minor illness such as cold or flu and should go back to normal relatively quickly. If levels continue to be high the condition is usually treated through medication.

STAGE 1 - i) ASK FOR HELP:

One of the hardest things for Chronic Fatigue sufferers to do is to delegate tasks to others. Most CFS sufferers have a natural self-expectancy to do it all... but when the body doesn't want to play any more it becomes both a mental and physical challenge to step back and ask for help.

Used to being a high achiever and doing many tasks in a day, mother nature has now stepped in and decided to slow your body down so it can refuel its energy levels and become healthy again.



The only way you will get better is to pace yourself and get others to help you.

If you are in the severe stages of CFS, you may need help with day to day tasks such as bathing and brushing your teeth. While those in latter stages of recovery may need help with grocery shopping and paying bills.

Whatever your stage of severity, don't be afraid to give jobs to those around you and to ask for help whenever you need it.

If you live alone, perhaps you can move in with a family member, seek the help of some neighbors or perhaps offer a spare room for “free rent” in exchange for the person to look after you. Do whatever it takes to delegate and get help from others.

Do not feel guilty and helpless. You are not a burden - you are fighting back from an illness that is zapping the energy out of you... and you need the help of those around you so you can get better again.

STAGE 1 - ii) GUT FLORA:

The **gut flora** is one of the main keys to recovery when it comes to Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and many other diseases of our modern society.



The gut flora (or intestinal flora) is one of the most important parts of our internal make-up and is

sometimes referred to as the “forgotten” organ. It is made up of about 100,000,000,000,000 (100 trillion) microorganisms in the digestive tract!

A healthy adult would normally have about 2 kilograms of these microorganisms living inside them. They work together in a highly organized micro-community to keep us healthy on the inside and perform numerous tasks that affect almost every part of the human body.

Picture the “good” gut bacteria as a colony of tiny ants supporting the walls of your digestive tract... all performing different duties and working in a sophisticated hierarchy to keep the “bad” bacteria away from the Queen Ant (your wellbeing)!

Research has shown that almost all diseases can be traced back to damaged or abnormal gut flora. If you want to get your health back, you must support your gut's “good” bacteria through diet and supplements to rejuvenate and strengthen the gut walls to stop the destructive “bad” bacteria from attacking your body.

If you have taken certain medications, especially antibiotics or penicillin, this will no doubt have killed off some “good” bacteria in your digestive tract. Antibiotics are a common gut flora enemy and will affect your ability to absorb vitamins and minerals from the foods you eat, trigger such complications as irritable bowel syndrome, as well as a lowered immune system.

While sometimes antibiotics are a necessary evil, you should always use diet and supplements to add “good” bacteria back into your system.

Note: It can take up to 8 weeks for certain species of “good” bacteria to restore themselves again.

While gut flora can be adversely affected by antibiotics, other aspects of severe illness such as a lowered level of immunity and not eating enough can also lower the level of “good” bacteria you carry.

GUT FLORA – FUNCTIONS

The gut flora performs many functions that are crucial to our wellbeing – including cell based activities that control our stamina, strength and vitality. The gut flora:

- ▶ stimulates cell growth and cell energy
- ▶ restricts the growth of damaging bacteria
- ▶ trains the immune system to fight viruses and toxic invasions
- ▶ protects from some diseases
- ▶ helps absorb carbohydrates that our cells alone can't break down
- ▶ provides energy and nutrients to body cells
- ▶ creates gases and organic acids needed by muscles
- ▶ helps produce energy-carrying molecules for the liver
- ▶ helps with the absorption of fats
- ▶ produces and helps absorb essential vitamins and nutrients such as vitamin k, calcium, magnesium, and iron.

GUT FLORA – IMMUNITY

From the day we are born, our gut flora begins to train our immune system to fight off viruses and toxic invasions. It learns to fight off damaging bacteria, and leaves the “good” bacteria in place to build up immunity against further attacks and potential diseases.

In fact, some of the very first gut bacteria we receive is through our mother's breast milk. This may be why many studies show that breast-fed babies get sick less than those that are bottle fed.

Approximately 83% of our immunity is found in the gut wall.

This figure in itself highlights the importance that the gut flora plays in our health and ability to fight off illnesses and harmful diseases.

GUT FLORA – METABOLISM

The gut flora plays an important role in the absorption of vitamins and nutrients in the body and helps the body digest and metabolize protein, fat and carbohydrates from foods for energy.

It also helps the body produce energy in the cells.

Recent research is also highlighting the important role our gut flora plays in helping to metabolize dietary carcinogens that are created through such things as the cooking processes we use, as well as our body's ability to handle excessive fat and sodium chloride intake. (For full research details on these eye-opening findings see: <http://carcin.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/21/3/387>)

GUT FLORA – PREVENT ALLERGIES

Gut flora is a vital key to preventing allergies.

Recent studies have shown that infants and young children exposed to more “good” bacteria through their mother's gut bacteria, are less likely to suffer from allergies in later life. (See <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/AllergiesNews/story?id=4727318&page=1>)

This is all part of the training process that the immune goes through from the day we are born. The “good” bacteria stimulates our immune system and teaches it not to overreact to non-harmful foreign particles entering the body. However, if our gut flora is inadequate, the immune system will not be trained correctly to curb this overreaction and result in higher rates of allergies.

GUT FLORA – PREVENT IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME

People that suffer from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) are often faced with the pain of constipation, diarrhea (or both), stomach cramps, bloating, and flatulence.

This again can be linked to our gut flora and how our immune system has been trained to deal with inflammation.

Higher incidences of irritable bowel syndrome have been reported in people that were not breastfed (or not for long), as well as people that eat large amounts of sugary foods and animal fats. Likewise, those with lower incidences of IBS have diets rich in fruit, vegetables and unprocessed foods.

Also, antibiotics affect gut flora and the body's ability to absorb dietary vitamins and minerals – often resulting in IBS.

GUT FLORA - DIET

(REMOVE DAIRY, SUGAR & WHEAT)

Diet is one of the most important things that affects our gut flora! (By diet I don't mean a diet to lose weight, I mean the foods we should eat for optimal health. However, if you are currently overweight, following a healthy gut flora eating regime should automatically put your body back in balance and shed weight without you having to focus on an actual weight-loss diet).

For starters, get your health practitioner to run some tests on any food allergies you may have. This is a great way to eliminate foods from your diet that will definitely be fighting your gut flora.

A “bad” diet will increase the number of “bad” worms and parasites living in your digestive tract... it's time to get rid of these little suckers!!!

Some of the nasty culprits that have a negative impact include (but not limited to):

- ▶ processed foods
- ▶ dairy
- ▶ non organic meat (injected with antibiotics/steroids for faster growth)
- ▶ sugary foods
- ▶ processed carbohydrates (eg. Pasta, cookies, white bread)
- ▶ wheat (anything made with white or whole wheat flour)

Some of the main changes ex-suffers have implemented to improve their gut flora was to drink organic goat's milk instead of cow's milk, have spelt and sour dough bread instead of wheat based bread, eliminate sugary and dairy based foods and have organic foods wherever possible.

LOW GLYCEMIC INDEX FOODS (LOW GI):

During my research of the foods and diets eaten by ex-CFS sufferers from around the world, it appears that a diet based on low glycemic index foods is an ideal choice for recovery.

The Glycemic Index (GI) was developed at a leading University in Australia and ranks foods on a scale from 0 to 100 based on the speed with which carbohydrates reach the bloodstream and raise blood glucose levels.

The glycemic index range is as follows:

Low GI = 0 – 55, Medium GI = 56 – 69, High GI = 70– 100

To view the online glycemic index, visit: <http://www.glycemicindex.com/>

Breakfast – choose traditional porridge or muesli instead of corn flakes



LOW



HIGH

Lunch – choose a wholegrain bread instead of wholemeal or white breads*



LOW



HIGH

*Note exception: lower GI varieties.

Dinner – choose Moolgiri, Basmati or Doongara rice instead of Jasmine rice



LOW



HIGH

IMPORTANT NOTE:

As a CFS sufferer stay well away from high GI foods because these will significantly add to your fatigue and drain your body of the vital energy it needs to recover.

Research has shown that to reduce the risk of chronic diseases, it's reasonable to say that a low GI diet which includes foods with a glycemic index of 45 or less is shown to achieve optimal results.

QUICK LIST OF LOW GI* FOODS

* This list is a guide only and some of the packaged options such as yogurts and soy milk will vary depending on the ingredients. Aim for organic and no added sugar options for lower GI rankings.

All-Bran Cereal 42

Apple 34

Apple juice 41

Artichoke <15

Asparagus <15

Avocado <15

Baked beans (canned) 48

Blackeyed Beans 50

Broccoli 10

Brown Rice 50

Buckwheat 51

Butter Beans 36

Cabbage 10

Carrots (raw) 16

Carrots (boiled) 41

Cashew Nuts 25

Cauliflower 15

Celery <15

Cherries 22

Chick Peas (canned) 42

Chillies 10

Coconut 45

Coconut Milk 41

Cucumber <15

Eggplant <15

Fettuccine (egg) 32

Grapefruit 25
Grapefruit juice 48
Grapes 43
Green beans 15
Hummus 6
Kidney Beans (canned) 52
Lentils (green) 30
Lentils (red) 21
Lettuce, all varieties 10
Low-fat yogurt, no added sugar <15
Macaroni 45
Milk (fat-free) 32
Mushrooms 10
Onions 10
Orange 40
Peach 28
Peach (canned, natural juice) 30
Peanuts 13
Pear 41
Pearl barley 25
Peas (Green, Frozen) 39
Peppers, all varieties <15
Peppers (red) 10
Pineapple juice 46
Plum 24
Porridge (Old-fashioned) 49
Prunes 29
Rice (Long-grain) 47
Snow peas <15
Soy milk 30
Spaghetti (Whole wheat) 37
Spinach <15

Squash <15
Strawberries 40
Sweet Potatoes 48
Tomatoes 15
Tomato soup 38
Walnuts 15
Yam 35
Yellow Split Peas 32
Yogurt (low fat, sugar sweetened) 33
Zucchini <15



NOTE: The GI of protein foods such as meat, fish, tofu, eggs, nuts, seeds and most vegetables are not listed because they have no (or very little) amounts of carbohydrate and therefore can't be ranked using the standard GI testing techniques. These foods will have an insignificant impact on blood glucose levels and lean serves can be eaten daily as part of a healthy CFS diet.

QUICK LIST OF HIGH GI* FOODS

Bagel 72
Cornflakes 80
Dates 103
Donuts 76
French Baguette 95
Parsnip 97
Potatoes (Fresh Mashed) 73
Potatoes (Instant Mashed) 80
Pretzels 83
Pumpkin 75
Rice Cakes 87
Rice (Instant White) 87
Sultana Bran 73
Water Crackers 78
Watermelon 80
White Bread 71

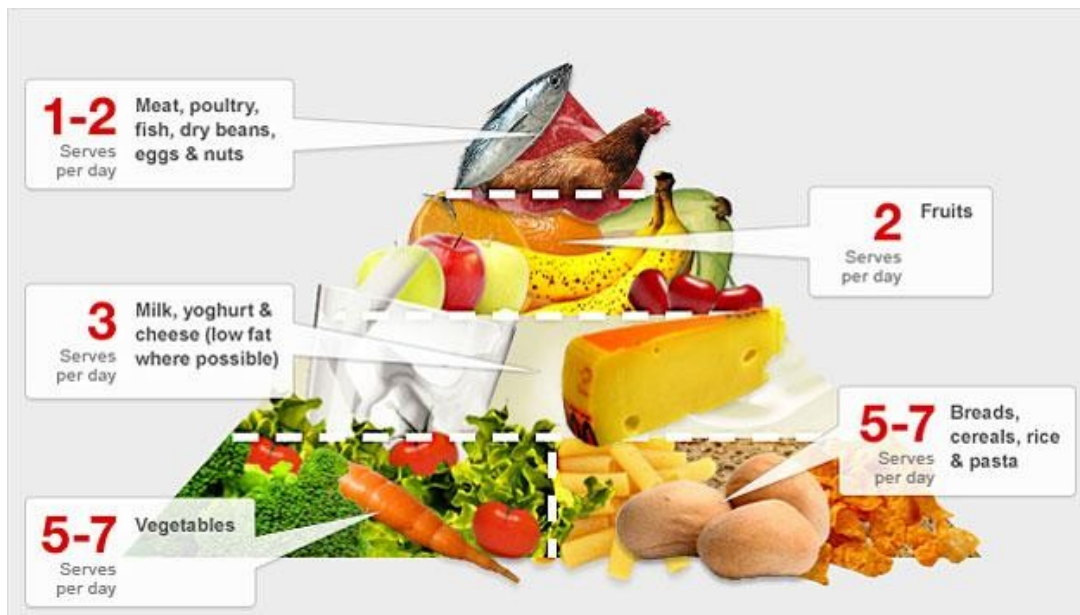


NOTE: A good rule of thumb to keep in mind when choosing foods to help you recover from CFS is to **think farm fresh – garden fresh – ocean fresh!!!**

The more a food has been touched by humans (or machines), the higher the GI level will be. For example, an apple comes straight from the tree (low GI), whereas a potato crisp is sliced, fried in oil, salted, seasoned, preserved, packaged and sent to the supermarket (high GI).

High GI foods include grains such as wheat, rye and rice, root vegetables such as potato and parsnip, alcohol, sugars, dried fruit and fruit juices.

THE 5 FOOD GROUPS (FOOD PYRAMID) & GLYCEMIC INDEX



For general good health and well-being, the five food groups of the food pyramid are considered a good guide for a balanced diet right across the western world.

Below is a summary of how each food group relates to the GI way of living!

1. Meat, Poultry, Fish, Beans, Eggs & Nuts:

As mentioned earlier, this food group is made up of protein based foods, so these have minimal (if any) impact on blood glucose levels when eaten. In other words, meat, chicken and fish have no GI! (Buy organic wherever possible).

Both vegetarians and non-vegetarians can enjoy a variety of low GI protein rich foods from this group including beans, lentils and legumes. If you are not vegan and can tolerate eggs, these are also a great source of protein and very easy to prepare. (Handy hint – add salt to the pot when boiling eggs to make them very easy to peel).

Nuts are also a very low GI protein food. While they are high in fat, this is primarily “good” unsaturated fat that is beneficial for health and easy to digest. Keep organic nuts on hand as a very convenient fast food to have instead of crisps or cookies.

2. Fruits:

Fruit is a very convenient snack food and two small serves form part of a healthy daily diet.

Keep in mind that fruit does have natural sugars in it and therefore should not be eaten in large quantities. Opt for low GI fruit such as berries and apples, and minimize high GI fruit such as watermelon.

Two small serves of fruit (about 150g each piece) should be plenty in one day.



A handy way to remember which fruits are low GI and which ones are high is to think of the climate they're grown in... for example, tropical fruits which often show their face in summer include pineapple, cantelope, watermelon, paw paw and papaya – and these are higher GI!

Low GI fruits tend to be grown in cooler climates and include such fruits as apples, pears, oranges, peaches, plums, and strawberries.

Keep in mind that even though some fruits do have a higher GI level, they generally still have very low levels of carbohydrates, and therefore do not have a huge impact on your blood glucose levels... so enjoy your high GI fruits in moderation.

3. Dairy:

The goal with dairy foods such as milk, cheese and yogurt is to increase your calcium intake for strong bones, while keeping your saturated fat intake low.

Opt for low fat and calcium enriched milk and yogurt, and choose live cultured yogurts where possible as they are easier to digest. And again – choose organic!

You may even find that you actually have an intolerance to dairy and lactose, but won't realize it until you choose alternatives and start to feel so much better.



Keep in mind that humans are the only animals that keep drinking milk once they have finished “suckling”... go figure.

Two alternatives to cow products include: soy milk and goat's milk. Always check the ingredients on the labels to make sure they don't have added sugar and wheat based thickeners. Health food stores are a great place to get a variety of options so you can taste different types and see what you prefer and what ultimately helps you feel the best.

Finally, you can also boost your calcium intake through calcium-rich foods such as broccoli, cooked dried beans and oranges.

4. Vegetables:

The vegetable section of the food pyramid is one of the most important when it comes to giving your body the energy, vitamins and antioxidants it needs to go on the journey of CFS recovery.



In fact, most salad vegetables (especially leafy greens) have such a small amount of carbohydrate that they can't even be ranked on the GI scale. You can eat as many of these nutrient packed foods as you like and it will not impact on your blood glucose levels.

Try to eat your salads and vegetables raw for maximum impact.

By steaming vegetables you not only lose many essential nutrients, but you also increase the GI of some vegetables such as carrots. Alternatively, try stir frying your vegetables so they cook quickly and stay crisp to maintain vitamins and minerals through the cooking process.

Also note that root vegetables tend to be higher GI because they are more starchy and have a higher carbohydrate content, so these should be kept to a minimum.

One of the biggest high GI vegetable culprits is potato. If you like your potatoes, it's time to find some alternatives. Some great lower GI replacements for potatoes include yam, sweet potatoes, wild rice and legumes. One thing I like to do is blend steamed cauliflower with some organic milk, a dash of olive oil and some Celtic salt for a great mashed potato substitute.

5. Breads, Cereals, Rice & Pasta:

This is one of the main sections of the gut flora diet that most people with chronic fatigue syndrome don't have right.



If you are eating lots of processed cereals, white bread, pasta and snack foods, then you are filling your body with *energy zapping* high GI foods that will add to your symptoms of chronic fatigue. These foods make your body struggle with digestion and put unnecessary stress on organs such as the liver. These foods also give you dramatic spikes in your blood glucose levels and will leave you feeling hungry within a short period of time - and will leave you craving more sugary and/or salty foods... and so the vicious cycle continues (often leading to weight issues and illnesses such as diabetes).

The easiest way to start eating right in this food group is to cut out foods made with refined flour such as processed breakfast cereals, cookies, crackers, white bread, cakes and snack foods. You should also eliminate high GI snacks such as rice cakes.

Handy Tip: look for gluten-free products as these will not be wheat based.

Breads:

Simply replace your current breads with nutritious alternatives that your body will benefit from and find easier to digest. For example, replace your regular bread with breads made from besan (chickpea), amaranth or legume flours as these are low GI and are absorbed slowly by the body. If you like to cook – or know someone that does – you can make your own bread using wheat-alternative flours and add extras such as buckwheat, psyllium husks and linseed grains for optimum health, vitality and energy.

Cereals:

It is difficult to find breakfast cereals that are low GI and gluten free, but you can make your own by going to the health food store and combining your own ingredients

– eg. buckwheat, amaranth, linseed grain, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, organic dried fruit and fresh grated coconut make a good mix.

Also, by keeping your serves smaller and adding extras such as fresh fruit and low fat yogurt, you'll lower your GI intake.

Rice and Pastas:

Regular white rice, pasta as well as corn based pasta (although gluten free) all tend to be high GI. If possible, cut these out of your diet and replace with pastas made from legumes or soy. Spaghetti and noodles are also a lower GI option. You could also try replacing with vegetable based options such as spaghetti squash or thin long slices of carrot or sweet potato strips done with a potato peeler. Looks gourmet and is good for you.

One of our family favorites is quinoa. This wholegrain is low GI and high in protein... so you won't have blood glucose spikes that drain your energy!! This is commonly available in the health food section of large grocery stores or from your health food store. It is very versatile and can be cooked like rice, can be eaten as a porridge and is great for grinding as a flour or for thickening soups and stews.

Wild rice is also another great option.

Although it is called “rice”, it is actually the seed of an aquatic grass and has twice the fiber and protein of brown rice.



RECOMMENDED COOKBOOK:



I have found a fantastic electronic Cookbook written specifically for food sensitive people that has recipes based on the foods that many ill and food sensitive people have eaten to get better!

This Cookbook is gluten-free, low-glycemic, allergy-aware with meat, organic based and designed to support your gut flora.

To find our more and to get your own copy, visit:

<http://5plans.glutnfree.hop.clickbank.net>

ORGANIC FOODS:

As a Chronic Fatigue Syndrome sufferer, it is important to put the least amount of stress on your body (both internally and externally) as possible. With this in mind, you should prevent as many toxins, pesticides, antibiotics and hormones from entering your body as you can.

Many foods these days are mass produced for quick profits. Fruit and vegetables are commonly sprayed with harsh chemicals so they have an attractive color, reach a certain size and to be more resistant to pests. These are grown for profit and consumerism, not for nutrition and taste!

Likewise, many meat producing animals are kept in inhumane breeding facilities where they are given antibiotics and steroids (growth hormones) so they grow quickly and can be sold to the marketplace.

The choice you need to make here is to try and choose organic foods whenever you can. This way you will avoid the consumption of pesticide residues, you'll support animal welfare and steer clear of artificial chemicals.

Organic foods can be quite expensive. If you can't afford to buy organic or it is difficult for you to source organic produce, select foods that have lower pesticide levels such as aubergine, cabbage, leeks and frozen peas.

Other options include shopping at farmer's markets, buying wholesale with a group of friends or having your fruit and vegetables delivered by a local farmer's co-operative.

Handy Tip: wash all of your fruit and vegetables thoroughly – even if they have been pre-washed for you. Some health food stores carry fruit and vegetable cleaning solutions designed to remove pesticide residue.

SEA SALT (HIMALAYAN AND CELTIC):

As part of a healthy CFS eating regime, you should add “pure” sea salts to your meals.

... Why “Pure” Sea Salts?

Don't buy regular table salt or sea salt that is mass produced and sold in bulk at your grocery store because this is biologically damaging. The whiter and drier the salt, the more it has been washed, refined and drained of the trace minerals and essential macro nutrients that “good” salt is meant to have.



In fact, only 7% of the world's salt production is used for food – the rest is used for industrial purposes! This is why salt manufacturers don't care about the negative impact that refined salt has on us.

Refined salt is blasted with heat, changing its very structure. It is then "chemically cleaned" – leaving Sodium Chloride without the life force of the essential minerals and trace elements it's meant to have. Additives such as dextrose and bleaching agents are then thrown into the mix, creating a product that's far from being naturally alive with minerals... what you are left with is a dead chemical!

Your body has to sacrifice energy in order to try and metabolize refined salt, and it upsets many processes within the body including fluid balance and elimination systems.

A shocking thing I found when I first learned about refined salt is that if you place fish from the ocean in a mixture of refined salt and water, they will quickly die. This is because the refined sodium chloride acts as a poison to them.



This is the same “white poison” that is added to so many of the foods found on our supermarket shelves every day. For example, preserved meats such as ham and salami, cheese, tinned food, sweets, crisps, cereals and bread are just a few of the products that spring to mind.

So why would you put such a poison in your body?

Probably because you never knew any different. From a young age we are conditioned to think that salt is bad. When in actual fact it is the refined salt that is bad, not the natural “pure” salt which is good and in fact essential for our well-being and overall health!

In order for our bodies to function properly, we need to stay away from the wrong salts and replace them with the natural “pure” salts essential to our health.

“Pure” sea salts such as Celtic and Himalayan salts are full of vital trace minerals that our bodies need! They provide major health benefits which are the total opposite to what refined salt does to the body! Pure salts are large grains, white/gray or pink in color and are quite moist because they are alive. Your health food store should be able to help you source the most pure sea salts available.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF “PURE” SEA SALTS

- balance saliva levels and replenish all the body's electrolytes
- help energy levels
- can help regulate sleep
- give higher resistance to infections and bacterial diseases
- supply over 80 vital trace minerals to promote optimum biological function and cellular maintenance
- balance alkaline/acid levels
- restore good digestion
- regulate metabolism
- can help to relieve allergies and skin diseases
- greatly reduce toxins and help prevent ill-health
- regulate blood pressure
- balance blood sugar levels
- help with absorption of nutrients
- enable liver, kidneys and adrenal glands to function efficiently
- help prevent muscle cramps, dizziness, exhaustion and convulsions
- help flush mucus and congestion
- keep bones and body strong
- support immune system
- natural anti-histamine

Not only does “pure” sea salt taste great, but it also has many health benefits that can aid in the recovery of chronic fatigue. Note: pure sea salts are very concentrated in taste and you won't need to add much for maximum taste and benefit!

WATER - 60% OF OUR BODY WEIGHT:

Did you know that about 60% of our body weight is made up of water?

In fact, water is by far the most important nutrient that our body needs for survival (besides oxygen). Without it, the average person could only survive about 2 to 10 days!



Every system in our body needs water for optimum health. From flushing toxins out of vital organs through to carrying nutrients to cells.

By not drinking enough water, you can become dehydrated and not have sufficient water in your body to carry out normal functions such as circulation, respiration and converting food to energy. **Even minor dehydration can lower your energy levels and make you feel tired!**


When you are dehydrated your blood becomes thicker and the heart has to work harder to circulate the blood efficiently. This can be very energy draining and not only result in physical fatigue, but also in mental debility such as difficulty concentrating – worsening the already debilitating effects of CFS.

So how much water should you drink?

The amount of water you should drink each day depends on such variables as how much exercise you do, what you eat, and the temperature (if it's hot you sweat more, and lose more water). Also, such things as diarrhea will make you lose more water than if you have regular bowel movements.

As a general guide, the average adult will expel about 2 ½ liters of water per day. This daily water loss is made up of 1 ½ liters of urine, and a one liter lost through breathing, sweating and bowel movements. About 20% of water loss (½ liter) is typically replaced through the foods you consume per day. This means that as a general rule of thumb you need an extra 2 liters of water per day to replace the fluids your body has lost (about 8 glasses per day).

The Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences recommends the following daily water intake:



Hydration Guidelines

**Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences
Total Daily Water Adequate Intake (AI) Summary**

Age Range	Daily Water Adequate Intake	
<i>Infants</i>		
0-6 months	3 cups * (0.7 L), assumed to be from human milk.	
7-12 months	3.5 cups (0.8 L), assumed to be from human milk and complementary foods and beverages. This includes ~3 cups (0.6 L) as total fluid, including formula, juices and drinking water.	
<i>Children</i>		
1-3 years	5.5 cups (1.3 L) total water**, including ~4 cups (0.9 L) as total beverages, including drinking water.	
4-8 years	7.5 cups (1.7 L) total water, including ~5 cups (1.2 L) as total beverages, including drinking water.	
<i>Adolescents</i>		
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
9-13 years	10.5 cups (2.4 L) total water, including ~8 cups (1.8 L) as total beverages, including drinking water.	9 cups (2.1L) total water, including ~7 cups (1.6 L) as total beverages, including drinking water.
14-18 years	14 cups (3.3 L) total water, including ~11 cups (2.6 L) as total beverages, including drinking water.	10 cups (2.3 L) total water, including ~8 cups (1.8 L) as total beverages, including drinking water.
<i>Adults</i>		
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
19-70+ years	16 cups (3.7 L) total water, including ~13 cups (3 L) as total beverages, including drinking water.	11.5 cups (2.7 L) total water, including ~9 cups (2.2 L) as total beverages, including drinking water.

* 1 cup equals 8 fluid ounces (~240 ml). Figures rounded up to the nearest cup.
 ** *Total water * includes fluids from all foods and beverages consumed.

AVOID ALCOHOL:

When you suffer from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, even a very small alcoholic drink can give you a very BIG hangover and drain any little energy you may have.

Your bodily functions are already struggling to do their job properly, so additional toxins such as alcohol put even greater stress on your gut flora, immune system and metabolic functions.



For some CFS sufferers alcohol is used as a coping mechanism to try and block out the day to day strain this illness puts on them, their family and their friends.

However, by consuming alcohol you are giving your body a significant set back every time!

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ON CFS SUFFERS:

1. Dehydration – Alcohol is a diuretic. Put simply, it is a drug which speeds up the rate at which the body loses water. By drinking alcohol you force your body to lose more water than it can hang on to because you are stopping your anti-diuretic hormone from working properly. Alcohol can also affect your bowel movements as it restricts the intestines ability to reabsorb salt and water, often causing diarrhea.

[Negative effects: lack of energy, inability to flush toxins from the body, muscle cramps, dizziness, faintness, inability to carry nutrients to cells, circulation problems, vitamin/mineral depletion, diarrhea and lethargy]

2. High Glucose Intake – Alcohol has a high sugar content and when consumed it significantly increases your blood glucose levels. In response, your body will produce more insulin to remove the glucose from your system. This can leave you feeling extremely lethargic and shaky. In turn your body will look for an energy boost - often resulting in a craving for “bad” carbohydrates such as crisps and processed snack foods that are high GI.

[Negative effects: increased production of insulin, excessive sweating, dizziness, blurred vision, lethargy, shakiness and “bad” food cravings.]

3. Liver Metabolism – Only about 10% of the alcohol you drink is released through your urine or breath. The remaining 90% is metabolized (broken down) by the liver.

Because of the diuretic effect of alcohol, the liver does not have enough water to remove toxins from the body. This means the liver is forced to take water from other organs such as the brain - resulting in a pounding headache!

To make it even worse, during the alcohol metabolism process, the liver creates further toxicity as it converts the alcohol into a substance called acetaldehyde. Acetaldehyde has toxic effects on our liver, brain and stomach lining, and has also been linked to cancer!

[Negative effects: inability to remove toxins properly, excess toxins in liver, brain and stomach, severe headaches, nausea, vomiting and heartburn.]

4. Sleep – Alcohol and dehydration disrupts sleep rhythms and will leave you deprived of quality and quantity of sleep... leaving you feeling tired and lethargic. If done night after night this can seriously affect your health. Alcohol also relaxes the throat muscles which leads to snoring.

[Negative effects: disrupted sleep rhythms, decrease of quality sleep, snoring.]

GUT FLORA - SUPPLEMENTS

When following the “feel good again” action plan, the second part to getting your gut flora healthy - and to fuel your body with the nutrients it needs to get better again - is to use dietary supplements.



Dietary supplements can provide you with the essential vitamins, minerals, fiber, fatty acids and amino acids your body needs for optimum health and well-being and to help fast track your road to recovery.

Over time, if you follow a healthy and balanced diet that includes foods from all the food groups discussed earlier, you should be getting the nutrients your body needs – but for now, you're body is in a severe state of stress and fatigue and you need to do everything possible to give your body a fighting chance to get better.

While some supplements can start to take effect within a matter of weeks, you should note that it takes a minimum of six months for the nutrients in your body to be fully restored.

PROBIOTICS

Probiotics are the friendly live micro-organisms (bacteria) that live inside your gut to help keep your immune and digestive systems in order. Often, medications such as antibiotics will kill off these “good” bacteria and leave a gut-flora imbalance that can have detrimental health effects. It is quite interesting that the term probiotics comes from the Greek pro and biota, meaning “for life” (as opposed to antibiotics)!

Given the importance that a balanced gut flora plays in your CFS recovery journey, you need to do whatever you can to re-populate your digestive system with “good” probiotics through foods and supplements.

PROBIOTIC FOODS:

Probiotics are mainly found in foods that are fermented or cultured. For example, yogurt, sauerkraut, yeast, fermented milk and soy drinks.

Most probiotic gut bacteria is lactic acid bacteria, of which *Lactobacillus acidophilus* is most commonly known. This is found in active cultured yogurt - check container label to make sure that active cultures are present.



SUPPLEMENTS:

As it can be difficult to get an adequate amount of probiotics into our systems through food alone, probiotic dietary supplements can help to replace the “good” bacteria that has been lost, as well as promote the growth of further “good” bacteria.

Probiotic supplements are available as capsules, powder, or liquid extract and are designed to resist stomach acid to ensure that they reach the large intestines for maximum impact.

To make sure that you get the full health benefits of taking probiotic supplements, look for those that have at least 10 million live bacteria per dose. Again, as most probiotic gut bacteria is lactic acid bacteria, look for probiotic supplements that include at least one type of bacteria from the *Lactobacillus* family.

BENEFITS OF PROBIOTICS:

An imbalance of gut flora can leave you feeling very unwell and has been linked to many serious illnesses and health issues right across the world.

By taking a daily dose of probiotics you will not only help to restore a healthy balance of gut flora, but you will enhance your inner health “for life”!

By building up the good bacteria through probiotics, your gut will again be able to properly digest proteins, carbohydrates, fiber and fats. It will also be able to transport vitamins and minerals through the gut wall and into your blood stream – giving your body the nourishment it needs for optimum health and vitality.

Just some of the benefits include:

- ▶ better digestion - which in turn helps to alleviate flatulence, constipation, diarrhea, stomach cramps, bloating and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- ▶ strengthens the immune system by regulating antibodies
- ▶ builds resistance to infection.
- ▶ helps break down foods and to absorb nutrients
- ▶ may reduce allergies
- ▶ anti-inflammatory effects
- ▶ helps “good” bacteria to grow in the colon – which cuts down the amount of bile converted into carcinogens (cancer-causing substances)

Handy Hint: When buying probiotic dietary supplements go to your local health supply store and get them to assist you in finding the best products possible. They may also have some additional research documentation from the manufacturers which can sometimes help in choosing one product over another. They should also have a good range of probiotic yogurt!

VITAMINS AND MINERALS:

Vitamins and minerals are important nutrients that your body needs to heal itself at a micro level.

As the body does not directly make vitamins or minerals, quite often people that don't include enough fruit, vegetables and water in their diets – or are ill and perhaps taking medications – can have deficiencies which result in weakness, abnormal metabolism and an inability for cells to function correctly.



Given that CFS sufferers are often too weak and tired to focus on a precise daily diet and that every part of the body is under enormous amounts of stress, it is important to use vitamin and mineral supplements to give your body the internal health boost it needs.

While ultimately it is best to get your vitamins and minerals from the foods you eat, using dietary vitamin and mineral supplements in the short-term will give your body the essential nutrients it needs for recovery.

Dietary vitamin and mineral supplements can be purchased from Health Food Stores and staff should be able to assist you with types, quantities and whether or not they may interfere with any prescription medications you may be taking. While they should be able to advise you on acceptable dosage ranges, it is advisable to speak to your health care provider to see if higher doses may be beneficial for you. You could also see a naturopath for further advise.

NOTE: You should check with your doctor to see if some booster injections may be beneficial for you. For example, many ex-sufferers have found that a series of vitamin B injections really gave them a big push along their road to recovery!

QUICK LIST OF ESSENTIAL VITAMINS:

Vitamin A – aids night vision, bone growth, antioxidant, helps reduce infections, helps keep skin soft

Vitamin B1 – metabolism, energy production, helps nervous system, muscles and heart function

Vitamin B2 – energy production, growth and production of antibodies and red blood cells, aids vision

Vitamin B3 – energy production, healthy skin, helps digestion, improves circulation

Vitamin B5 – energy production, helps reduce stress, helps fight infections

Vitamin B6 – metabolism, nervous system function, regulates hormones and red blood cells, production of antibodies

Vitamin B9 – growth and production of cells

Vitamin B12 – metabolism, nervous system function, growth and production of red blood cells, helps memory

Vitamin C – maintenance of bones and teeth, helps use other vitamins, antioxidant, aids mineral absorption, promotes healthy immune system

Vitamin D – helps absorb calcium for strong teeth and bones, antioxidant

Vitamin E – antioxidant, produces red blood cells, helps reduce skin inflammation

Vitamin H – energy production, aids carbohydrate metabolism, helps break down fats and proteins

Vitamin K – helps blood clot, promotes healthy skin, helps to maintain strong bones

Vitamin Q (Co-enzyme Q10) – anti aging, boosts cell energy, antioxidant, promotes healthy immune system, helps nervous system, aids heart muscle metabolism

Note: You may also like to try a supplement called **D-ribose**, shown to help reduce fatigue and muscular aches and pains in people with chronic illness. However, some people with candida do not tolerate this well. You'll need to test this for yourself, but it has proved extremely beneficial to a lot of people and is definitely worth a try!!

Minerals work with vitamins to help keep the body in top form. Minerals from food help regulate body fluids; keep blood and bones healthy; regulate nerve function; promote muscle tone, aid the cardiovascular system, and help produce energy.

QUICK LIST OF ESSENTIAL MINERALS:

Calcium – essential for strong bones and teeth, regulates heart beat, regulates muscle contractions, aids proper blood clotting

Chloride – helps body digest food and absorb other nutrients, regulates body fluids

Copper – helps absorb iron, antioxidant, forms healthy red blood cells, helps produce energy

Iodine – needed to maintain normal metabolism, aids in making thyroid hormones

Iron – regulates cell growth, helps transport oxygen to cells, promotes healthy immune system

Magnesium – keeps heart rhythm steady, aids maintenance of normal muscle and nerve function, regulates blood pressure, regulates blood sugar levels, promotes healthy immune system

Manganese – energy production, healthy skin and bone growth, helps body break down fats, antioxidant, aids metabolism, helps heal wounds

Molybdenum – helps the body use proteins, fats and carbohydrates, helps detoxify sulfites

Phosphorus – helps metabolize protein, calcium, and glucose, aids bone and tooth formation, cell growth, heart muscle contraction, kidney function, energy production, regulates blood

Potassium – regulates blood pressure, helps kidneys and heart function properly

Selenium – antioxidant, promotes healthy immune system

Sodium – helps regulate water in and around body cells, regulates blood pressure

Zinc - promotes healthy immune system (**one of the most common deficiencies**)

NOTE: Some of these minerals may not be available in supplement format. Consult your health provider to determine what you are deficient in to assist in finding the best supplements for you.

HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS:

Some herbal supplements have been shown to fight fatigue and help boost energy levels.

Check with your health practitioner prior to using herbal supplements to make sure they won't interfere with any other medications you're taking. They can also advise how long and how much you should take. Ideally a GP that also specializes in natural medicines would be a great help.

QUICK LIST OF HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS TO HELP CFS:

Aloe Vera Juice – helps relieve heart burn and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), aids in regulating blood glucose levels, promotes healthy digestion, helps rebuild muscle tissue

***Cod Liver Oil** – helps build and maintain strong bones, promotes healthy brain and nervous system, helps reduce inflammation, improves heart and muscle function, improves memory, helps reduce stress, reduces muscle and joint pain, helps relieve irritable bowel syndrome

***Cordyceps** – boost immune system, builds muscle, reduces fatigue, improves energy through cellular oxygen uptake, regulates blood pressure, strengthens the heart and lungs, protects liver and kidneys, improves circulation, makes you more alert

CorEnergy - a combination of cordyceps, ginseng and green tea.

Ginkgo (Ginkgo Biloba) – improves memory, helps blood flow to the brain, improves circulation, antioxidant

Ginseng Extract – increases energy and stamina, improves mental and physical ability, regulates blood pressure, helps reduce fatigue and stress levels, helps lower cholesterol

***Glyconutrients** – strengthens immune system at cellular level, builds resistance to viral and bacteria infections, removes toxins from body, aids tissue and cell repair, regulates nerve function, improves memory, helps process cholesterol, helps cells to communicate

Green Tea Extract – antioxidant, energy production, reduces headaches, reduces cholesterol, helps strengthen immune system, regulates blood pressure, helps detox

Rose Hip – good for joints, aids joint tissue growth, helps fight infections

Star Flower Oil – good for joints, lowers blood pressure, boosts immune system

* My top 3 picks for Chronic Fatigue sufferers ☺

ANTIOXIDANTS:

Antioxidants are a group of certain vitamins, minerals and nutrients that fight free radicals in your body.

Free radicals are “nasty” atoms that cause damage to your body's cells and immune system – ultimately leading to infections and diseases such as cancer.

While many antioxidants are provided through fruits and vegetables, often people with poor diets or those suffering from illness, may not have enough antioxidants to help protect their body's cells from damage.



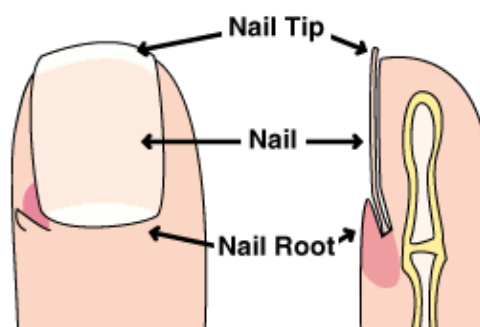
FINGERNAIL HEALTH ANALYSIS:

A deficiency of antioxidants such as B12 is often highlighted by a lack of moons on your fingernails.

Other illnesses and deficiencies can also be reflected by the ridges, shape and color of your nails.

For more information on fingernail health analysis, go to:

http://www.naildoctors.com/nail_health.html



QUICK LIST OF ANTIOXIDANTS TO HELP CFS:

Alpha-Lipoic Acid – energy production, cell regeneration, regulates cholesterol and blood sugar levels, helps liver detox, protects lens/retina eye degeneration

Beta Carotene – boosts immune system, fight infections, protects against toxins, promote growth of healthy cells, inhibits growth of unhealthy cells

“B” Vitamins (B12 is especially powerful with fast acting results) – metabolism, energy production, helps nervous system, muscles and heart function, production of antibodies and red blood cells, aids vision, helps digestion, improves circulation, helps reduce stress, helps fight infections, regulates hormones, helps memory

Coenzyme Q10 - anti aging, boosts cell energy, promotes healthy immune system, helps nervous system, aids heart muscle metabolism

Flavonoids – anti-bacterial, anti-viral, helps keep heart healthy, anti-inflammatory

Flax Seeds – lowers cholesterol, lowers high blood pressure, antioxidant, high in fiber, fight inflammation, stabilizes blood sugar levels

Fruit Enzymes – increase energy, reduce fatigue, strengthen immune system, fight infection, cell regeneration, maintain friendly gut bacteria

Glutathione – restores immune cells, helps detox, helps keep liver healthy, energy production at cellular level, protects cells from toxins

Melatonin – helps regulate sleep/wake cycles, promotes quality sleep, helps prevent cluster headaches, boosts immune system, helps fight insomnia

Methionine – helps detox, helps remove heavy metals from the body, energy production, helps muscle movement, promotes healthy heart

Selenium – protects the heart, boosts immune system, fights bad bacteria and viruses, help fight muscle weakness, help digestion

Superoxide Dismutase (SOD) – repairs and reduces further cell damage, anti-inflammatory, healthy joint function, boosts immune system, aids respiratory system

Vitamin A – aids night vision, bone growth, helps reduce infections, keeps skin soft

Vitamin C – maintenance of bones and teeth, helps use other vitamins, aids mineral absorption, promotes healthy immune system

Vitamin D – helps absorb calcium for strong teeth and bones

Vitamin E – production of red blood cells, helps reduce skin inflammation

EPSOM SALT BATHS (MAGNESIUM):

While magnesium was already mentioned in some detail in the minerals section of this book, it warrants an extra section of its own due to the great benefit it can have – especially on those suffering from severe muscle and joint pain...



As mentioned earlier, magnesium helps to keep the heart rhythm steady, aids maintenance of normal muscle and nerve function, regulates blood pressure, regulates blood sugar levels, and promotes a healthy immune system.

One of the main things many chronic fatigue sufferers find is that if they take a regular bath with Epsom Salt in it, their bodies seems to absorb the magnesium from the salt and make their muscles and joints feel relaxed.

The magnesium from the Epsom Salt can help to reduce pain and ultimately will leave you feeling invigorated and with more energy!

Epsom Salts are available from both grocery and health food stores.

If you also use Magnesium dietary supplements, you may find that you get diarrhea because you're body is getting a little too much magnesium. Readjust to suit your body.

NOTE: If you are seeing good results with magnesium, you may want to discuss magnesium injections with your doctor. These are painful, but may be very worthwhile.

STAGE 1 - iii) SLEEP:

In addition to getting your Gut Flora in order through diet and supplements, the next major part of stage 1 of the “feel good again” action plan is for you to get your wake and sleep cycle into a regular pattern.

Given that we spend a third of our lives sleeping (that's 30 years of sleep if you live to 90), it highlights just how important it is to optimize your sleep cycle.

When you suffer from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, there are many things that can disrupt your sleep – eg. worry, napping during the day, muscle pain, stress, as well as job and family commitments. As a consequence, your irregular sleep patterns will play havoc with your immune system and hold you back from being able to fight illness and rebuild energy levels – leaving your body trapped in a vicious cycle of suffering and stalled recovery!

While you may be getting lots of sleep in terms of total hours slept in a 24 hour period, it is important to follow the set **nightly** sleep rules outlined in this section, in order to give your body the fighting chance it needs to recover from CFS.

7 TO 9 HOURS - EVERY NIGHT:

The main thing you will need to do when it comes to sleep is to aim for 7 to 9 hours sleep – every night!

Case Study Example: David aimed to sleep 9 hours. He set this from **9.30pm to 6.30am** so he would have a full 9 hour sleep cycle per night. While initially he incorporated short daytime naps, he always set his alarm clock for 20 minutes to make sure he never napped for too long – allowing his night sleep pattern to regulate itself quicker.

As a CFS sufferer, you probably find that you go to sleep late and get up late – and this is likely a sleep pattern that started well before you became ill. However, in order to get better, you need to reverse your “night owl” habits and aim for a set sleep pattern of 7 to 9 hours – every night (even on weekends).

Also, **you will need to be asleep well before 11pm each night**... this is because your gall bladder and liver work their hardest to remove toxins from your body around this time. This detoxing process is so important to your immune system and you must work with nature to ensure your organs can do their job to help you get better!

It is also extremely important to have a very quiet sleeping environment. Even if you aren't woken up, noise (especially out of the ordinary noise) during sleep has been shown to increase blood pressure and keep your body in a state of alert - weakening your immune system and lowering energy levels because your body is in a state of constant stress when it should be recuperating.

QUICK TIPS FOR YOUR 9 HOUR SLEEP CYCLE

- ▶ Sleep in a quiet room (close bedroom door if you need to)
- ▶ Make the room totally dark by closing curtains/blinds/doors
- ▶ Open window slightly for fresh air flow (as long as it doesn't let distracting noise in from outside) – or put a fan on low
- ▶ Don't have any other distractions in the room eg. pets, kids, books, television, telephone, snoring partner etc
- ▶ Avoid stimulants like caffeine
- ▶ Avoid stressful situations at night time such as bills, visitors and arguing
- ▶ Go to the toilet before bed to minimize the chance of waking up due to a call of nature!

NOTE: if you need a nap in the day, take it. You can't expect to implement this new sleep pattern in just a few nights.

SLEEPING TABLETS:

To take or not to take – that is the question!

If you are not sleeping well at night, then the aid of sleeping tablets may help you achieve the 9 hour sleeping cycle your body needs for recovery.

It may be worth trialling them for a short period to see if they help you. However, do try to avoid sleeping tablets that have a reputation of leaving you feeling like you have a hangover a day or two later as this will defeat the purpose of getting you to feel better during the day. Your doctor/pharmacist should be able to advise you on this.

Keep in mind that sleeping tablets are **not a long term solution.**

Only use sleeping tablets if you absolutely need to and if none of the other methods in this sleep section of the action plan are helping on their own.

If you are unable to sleep because you are grieving the loss of a loved one, you should also seek advice from your health practitioner as sleeping tablets can disrupt the normal grieving process.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Consult your doctor or pharmacist as to which tablets would work best for you, get the right dosage and ensure they won't interfere with any other medications you may be taking. Also, some medications cause sleeplessness, so make sure you rule this out before starting on sleeping tablets.

DARKEN ROOM (MELATONIN):

The body's wake and sleep cycles are regulated by a naturally occurring hormone called melatonin.

Melatonin – helps regulate sleep/wake cycles, promotes quality sleep, helps prevent cluster headaches, boosts the immune system, and helps fight insomnia.

Melatonin is produced when there is an absence of light on the skin - this is why it is extremely important to sleep when it is dark and to have your bedroom totally blackened!

Any light on the skin inhibits the production of melatonin and plays havoc with your sleep cycles as a result.

In fact, chronic insomnia is often due to a lack of melatonin!

With this in mind, you need to adjust your light levels in order to help set your sleep cycles.

When it is time to sleep, turn the lights off, draw the curtains, cover your alarm clock or radio face and make your room as dark as possible with no light coming in so that your body knows it is time to sleep. This process will allow the production of melatonin to take place and will help to adjust your wake/sleep cycles - and ultimately make you feel revived and more energetic!

If you feel you may have a melatonin deficiency, you can buy over the counter melatonin supplements in the form of pills and liquid from your health food store or pharmacy.

Many CFS sufferers have had better results with melatonin than they have with sleeping tablets! Liquid melatonin seems to be the most effective form as it is simple to take, fast acting, usually more purely manufactured and offers fantastic sleep!

Note: It can take around one to two weeks for melatonin to take effect.

RESTRICT FLUIDS AT NIGHT:

While it is important to drink plenty of water, you should restrict the amount of fluids you drink at night time. The last thing you want to be doing is waking up through the night because you need to go to the toilet.

If you find yourself constantly having broken sleep because you need to visit the bathroom (even though you haven't had much to drink of an evening and have gone to the toilet before bed), you may need to be checked for other medical conditions such as diabetes which result in an excessive need to urinate.

NO CAFFEINE AFTER MIDDAY (12PM):

If like most people you drink caffeinated drinks such as coffee and tea any time after midday, try to cut this out and see if you sleep better at night.

This is because caffeine is a stimulant and it can effect your ability to fall asleep up to 12 hours after you have consumed it!



From lunchtime to the evening, substitute any caffeinated drinks you may be having with water or nutrient rich herbal teas such as rosehip which is very high in vitamin C and helps to boost the immune system and digestive function to help fight off infections (can be drunk hot or cold).

As a general guideline, have your final evening drink of water or herbal tea no later than 7.30pm (if going to sleep at 9.30pm) – this seems to work well to keep you sleeping through the night. 😊

FRESH AIR:

The air we breathe plays a very essential role in keeping us alive – without it, we cannot last longer than a few minutes!

While air is mainly made up of nitrogen (78%) and oxygen (21%), it is the oxygen component which is important for us as this is what fuels our cells and keeps our minds and bodies revitalized.

When you are indoors and have no (or inadequate) cross-ventilation, you and those around you are breathing the same air over and over again – thereby lowering it's vitality. This also sets the prime breeding environment for air-borne bacteria and viruses.

In essence, you wouldn't eat someone else's chewed up food, so why breathe in their second-hand air?

A lack of good natural fresh air can make you feel fatigued, mentally drained, dizzy, hot, irritable and restless... and this is especially bad at night when you are trying to sleep and revitalize your body for the coming day's activities.

The flow of fresh air is essential to a good nights sleep because you will have fully energized oxygen circulating through your body, as opposed to re-breathing the same old stale air.

If you cannot leave your windows open at night, try to go outside for at least half an hour in the early evening to fill your lungs with some good clean air. The best air to breathe is that close to the ocean, in the mountains and away from big smoggy cities. If you can't escape “dirty” air, it may be worth buying an air purifier for your home – a portable option is best so it can be in the bedroom at night and the living area by day.

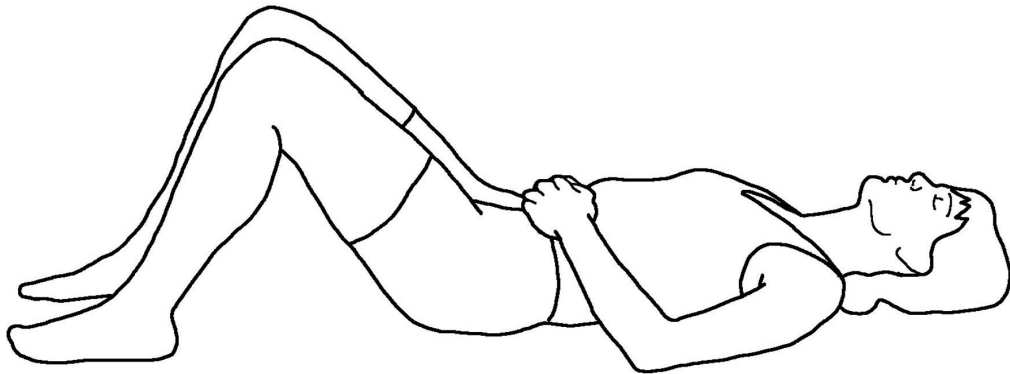
AIR TEMPERATURE:

In addition to having fresh air flowing through your bedroom, you should also take note of the temperature of the room. Essentially it should not be too warm.

The ideal temperature range that promotes good quality sleep is 64-68F (18-20C). If you live in an area with extreme temperatures you may need to consider a ceiling fan, central heating system and/or reverse cycle air-conditioning.

DEEP BREATHING EXERCISE:

As part of your nightly sleeping routine, get in the habit of doing some deep breathing before going to sleep (you may even like to do this outside in the early evening).



Take a long deep breath and hold it in for 10 seconds - then blow out as much of the air as possible. Repeat several times.

You may want to repeat this exercise when you wake in the morning to get your lungs ready for the day ahead.

“FEEL GOOD AGAIN” ACTION PLAN

STAGE 2:

Now that you have implemented stage 1 of the “feel good again” action plan, you should be starting to feel a whole lot better already.

Remember, it's important not to skip over any parts or to try to jump ahead to stage 2 first. A critical part to your recovery is to follow the action plan in the correct order and not to rush any section to get to the next. You must factor “time” into your recovery.

Your gut flora and wake-sleep cycles must be in order first before you progress on to the next stages. By having stage 1 in place, your body should be strong enough and energized enough to help you to through the final stages of the recovery plan.

Your body will dictate when you are ready to progress and YOU MUST listen to the physical and mental instructions your body is giving you.

While some of stage 2 does overlap with stage 1 (especially pacing and work commitments), your primary focus must always be to get your gut flora and your wake-sleep cycles in order. Always ask for help if you need it.

There's a Chinese Proverb which says: “The man who removes a mountain begins by carrying away small stones”.

This is so relevant to what you are doing right now - stay focused and keep moving your small stones – this is the only way to remove your CFS mountain!

Now you are ready to begin stage 2 of the “feel good again” action plan...

STAGE 2 - i) PACING:

PACE – REST:

Pacing is a strategy you need to use in order to manage your energy levels effectively during your recovery process.

Your body will have fluctuations in energy based on your body's natural bio-rhythms, but more importantly for CFS sufferers, you will also have varying levels of energy depending on what activities you are undertaking during the day.

You need to set yourself realistic activity and exercise goals each day that ensure your CFS symptoms don't worsen when you do them. If you are over-exerting yourself – REST – or you will only be stepping backwards with your recovery.

If you still have mild symptoms at rest, don't add extra activities to your day. Only when you feel you can function without suffering any symptoms at rest can you gradually start to add extra activities to your pacing strategy.

Always keep in mind that you must feel good at rest in order to add the next activity. Allow up to 4 days for any delayed fatigue to show before moving on.

If you push yourself too hard and too fast, you will worsen your CFS symptoms again and your energy will be drained and replaced by discomfort, pain and/or muscle weakness.

YOU MUST PACE YOURSELF –

**ONLY INCREASE ACTIVITY IF YOU FEEL WELL AT REST FOR AT LEAST 4
DAYS AFTER ADDING AN EXTRA ACTIVITY TO YOUR PACING
STRATEGY!!**

ALLOW TIME FOR RECOVERY:

Given that many CFS sufferers are overachievers, it is common for them to try to do things quickly and to fit a lot of things into a day, not giving the body time to recover and replenish its precious energy resources.

Your body is in shut down mode because it can't keep up with everything you have been trying to do. Nature is stepping in and saying “slow down... you're going to fast... I don't have any energy left!”

You must take heed and listen to what your body is telling you. Without pacing yourself and allowing plenty of recovery time, you will continue to keep your body in a state of stress and continue to suffer the miserable symptoms of Chronic Fatigue.

Remember, the level of severity and the symptoms you suffer can be very different from the next CFS sufferer, so you must adjust recovery time according to how you feel and what your body is telling you.

Think of your recovery time in terms of “sharpening your axe”... if you have an axe that is blunt and you try to chop down a tree it could take you hours, but if you stop chopping and spend a little time sharpening your tool, you can effortlessly chop down the tree in no time!



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AVOID STRESS:

Given that the CFS body is already under enormous stress and struggling to create the energy it needs to get through the day, it is essential to avoid any additional stress in your life in order to get your body strong, revitalized and healthy again.

It was likely a stressful situation or set of events that got your body to this stage in the first place – eg. physical trauma, emotional stress, or late nights and taking on way too much in your day to day life... don't get yourself in this same position again.



Continue stage 1 of the recovery plan and add to your new health-building lifestyle by avoiding stressful situations which could bring back symptoms you thought were gone.

CFS is a stress related illness - physical stress, mental stress - both take their toll on your body and must be avoided in order to continue to get better.

SIGNS OF STRESS:

- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Trouble concentrating
- ▶ Difficulty sleeping
- ▶ Constantly feeling hungry – or no hunger at all
- ▶ Mood swings
- ▶ Feeling worried and/or anxious
- ▶ Feeling lack of control
- ▶ Headaches / Backaches

QUICK TIPS FOR AVOIDING STRESS:

- ▶ make a list of all stressors in your life (both big and small)
- ▶ add “why” these things stress you to the list
- ▶ go through the list and work out how to remove the stressor from your life eg. change jobs, move house, ask others to change, change your behavior
- ▶ get organized – plan, schedule, do similar tasks in one go eg. phone calls
- ▶ don't commit to tasks where others expect too much of you
- ▶ delegate jobs and ask for help
- ▶ learn to say NO
- ▶ avoid arguments – especially at night time before bed
- ▶ do breathing exercises (as outlined in sleep section of the recovery plan)
- ▶ phone a support person and talk problems through (eg. friend, relative, counselor)
- ▶ don't get angry – forgive, forget or seek counseling
- ▶ practice open communication
- ▶ meditate
- ▶ watch a good comedy – smile and laugh!

While it is often difficult to avoid stressful situations, by applying stress management techniques, asking for help and trying to avoid stress whenever you can, you'll be well on your way to helping your body reach the next level of recovery.

You'll get so much more done when you are not stressed because you'll be able to fully focus.

Plan your day in advance and only do what you can.

Allow plenty of “free” time for rest and unexpected last-minute tasks that may come up. You'll find that you are much more productive with the little time and energy you have – and you'll relax your body so it can continue to get better!!

STAGE 2 - ii) WORK:

Work is one area of our lives which is difficult to avoid because we need money to pay bills and keep food on the table. However, with the symptoms of CFS (especially in the severe stages) it can be impossible to go to work.

If you are well enough at rest to continue your current position, or have sick leave owing to you, don't quit your job.

There are options for you to consider well before you decide to leave your job...

PART-TIME:

Rather than having no job at all, speak to your employer and thoroughly explain your situation. Show them medical certificates and any doctor's reports you may have. Make them realize that you are not being lazy but that you are extremely ill and need time to recover.

If possible see if you can cut back your hours or change to part-time for a while. A change of hours could also make life easier for you without compromising the amount of hours you work – eg. you may be able to start later and finish later to avoid the stress of rush hour traffic.

Perhaps you can work from home - even if only for part of the week. By working from home you'll be able to pace yourself and fit in periods of work during times when you have the energy to do so, rather than forcing yourself to do the work during standard business hours.

Being able to work from home will also lower your commuting costs and travel time – leaving you with extra money and time to help with your recovery.

AFTERNOON WORK:

Given that most Chronic Fatigue sufferers are natural night-owls, it is common for their energy levels to be higher in the afternoon than in the morning. If this is the case with you, try to schedule your work duties for later in the day.



See if you can change your work hours so you can start later and finish later – or if working from home, plan to do your work in the afternoon rather than in the morning.

If your work hours do allow for afternoon shifts, then take the opportunity to get plenty of rest in the mornings and evening.

If possible, keep an energy diary and see how productive you are during certain hours of the day. This will help to determine when you are at your most productive. This way you can plan your most energy draining tasks for that time.

If your work takes up all the energy you have, then you definitely must restrict what you do outside of work. Remember the golden rule – pace and rest... and always ask for help if you need it!

NOTE: If you are still working full-time, you may be running on adrenaline – a hormone which the body releases in response to stress. It raises your heart and respiratory rates and over time can harm your body even more. You may find that if you do eventually go to part-time work (or no work at all) that your body will go into full shut-down mode for weeks and maybe even months.

DELEGATE:

It is very common for CFS sufferers to like being in control and doing everything themselves. Therefore it is often difficult to hand over tasks for others to do – especially in a work environment when a job well done reflects favorably on *you* and can possibly lead to promotions and pay increases.

However, your health is now your number priority and it is time to let go of the reins a little and to allow others to help you.

If you are not comfortable delegating tasks yourself, ask your supervisor or employer to help you with the delegation process. This way they will be aware of your situation and can better help you also.

If you have no-one you can delegate work to, speak with your boss and see if they are able to give you a little less responsibility for a while.

It may even be possible for you to delegate some out-of-office tasks to others in order to help you conserve more of your energy. For example, if you usually drive to work and battle the challenges of rush hour, then you may be able to find someone that can drop you off and pick you up from work instead. Maybe you can even car pool with a co-worker.

Perhaps your employer would be willing to take on a work-experience student for a while and they can assist you with answering phones, checking emails and other less demanding day to day tasks that can free up some of your time.

As you can see, there are many “out of the box” ideas you can use to help get through each day... just remember that getting others to help you is important if you want to continue to get better – both at home and at work!

JOB SHARE:

Job share is an interesting way that you may be able to lower your work hours or move into a part-time role while you are trying to recover from CFS.

Instead of just you doing your job, another person would be hired and the workload, pay and benefits would be split between you. This could be set as split work days, split work weeks, alternating weeks or even working at the same times but for less hours a day.



It is a very flexible solution that can benefit both you and your employer.

Not only is job sharing an opportunity for you to lower your stress levels and get in control of your workload while you are unable to work full-time, but it is also a great way for your employer to keep a valued employee and not have you leave with all the skills and knowledge that you bring to the organization.

It may even be that the other job share employee is only hired for a set time so you can return to your full time position at the end of that period.

If job share is something that you and your employer agree is a suitable solution to help you get better without having to quit your job, then you will need to make sure the other employee will be someone you can work well with and that has skills and experience similar to your own.

It is important that tasks are divided fairly and that you have good lines of communication either face to face, via telephone or through email and computer logs.

SICK LEAVE:

If you do not feel well enough to work or need some recovery time, check with your employer to see how much paid sick leave you have available to use.

Maybe use this to cut a few hours here and there, or use the entire amount if you feel you need it. Note that sick leave usually also covers caring for family members that are ill... so if you have family members with accumulated sick leave, they may be eligible to take “paid” days off work to help look after you.

If you do not have any paid sick leave owing to you, perhaps you can negotiate to take some unpaid time off or use some outstanding holiday leave.

BENEFITS:

If you are physically or mentally unable to work and earn an income, the government has a range of financial benefits you may be eligible to receive.

The process to get financial government assistance usually involves medical certificates, paperwork and interviews with social services workers. While this can be a draining process, your welfare is at stake and you will need the money while you are unable to work.

Ask your family, friends, employer or social worker to help you. They may be able to assist with filling out forms and driving you to appointments.

You may also be eligible for additional benefits such as a health care discounts and rent assistance payments. These benefits will vary from country to country and you will need to check with your local social security service department to see what is available in your region.

STAGE 2 - iii) RELATIONSHIPS:

FAMILY:

Wherever possible, try to get help from your family. Give them a copy of this book so they know what they can do to help you recover.

While you may feel like you are being a burden on them, it is important to realize that their help will go a very long way in helping you get better. They also need to realize that you are not seeking attention or being lazy – but that you are very ill and your body is struggling to produce the energy it needs to get through each day.

Most importantly, your family need to help you to get good nutrition and plenty of quality sleep. Perhaps a relative could cook some meals for you to keep in the freezer for when you don't feel well enough to cook. They may also be able to buy some fresh groceries for you if you are unable to leave the house.

Sit down together and work out how they could best help you.

Children:

If you have children to look after, maybe they can stay with grandparents or cousins for a while.

Depending on the kids' age, they may be able to do some basic chores to help you around the house eg. taking the trash out, making their lunch and bringing in the washing. They will enjoy the feeling of being needed and the fact that they can help to look after you and make you feel better. Perhaps even reward them with a sleep over at a friends house... this is a win-win because it gives you a night off too.

If your child needs help with their homework, try to get a spouse, relative, friend or neighbor to help. Speak to the teacher and explain your situation, they may be able to offer some extra help to your child after school or lessen the workload on them for a while to help reduce stress levels for both you and your child.

Spouse/Partner:

When you have CFS your spouse will also be going through a lot of emotions. It is crucial to maintain open communication and to listen to each other. If you don't discuss each other's feelings, this can cause stress, resentment and anger rather than the loving and caring environment needed to get better.

If you feel you are not communicating well and that neither of you understand each other's needs, it may be worth seeing a marriage counselor (or getting one to home visit). This should help to reduce stress on both of you.

Your spouse or partner has probably come to know you as some type of super hero that just magically gets everything done all the time – but in your condition this is no longer possible. The pain and fatigue will be exhausting and your lack of energy will be a dramatic change from how you used to be.

This change is something that both of you will need to cope with. You must both discuss your feelings and help each other through this tough time. If the well partner doesn't understand what you are going through, try some techniques like those used to mimic what it feels to be pregnant...

For example, attach weights to their arms and legs – set an alarm clock to go off in the middle of the night – allow only three to four hours sleep per night... Chances are they won't even try this two days running and it should get the point across!

Don't use this technique any longer than 5 days as you ultimately need your spouse's energy to be there to help you.

FRIENDS:

This is a time when you will truly discover who your “real” friends are. Those that really care about you will be there for you and will understand that you need them to support you both physically and emotionally.



A true friend will help you with errands and chores, and they'll be there to talk through your problems and feelings with you.

Be honest and open with your friends so they understand what you are going through. They need to understand that you do not have the energy to do the things you used to do with them – in fact, you may be housebound and only be able to see them if they come and visit you.

At times they may want to take you out of the house so you can have a change of scenery.... whilst they are well meaning in doing this, if you are not up to it, make sure you politely decline their kind offer and tell that that you need to stay home and rest.

Also, make sure your friends call you first to make sure you have the energy for them to stop by. If you become tired during their visit, make sure you tell them that you need to have a nap or a lie down.

Open communication is so important when it comes to your friends understanding what you are going through. Whatever you do, don't isolate yourself and lose valuable friendships because of CFS – you need your good friends now more than ever.

COMMUNITY:

Many CFS sufferers are heavily involved with social and community commitments that take up a lot of time and energy. It doesn't matter what it is, whether it's your local sporting club or involvement with a parent and teacher committee, it's time to have a break and let someone else look after this.



You need all the energy you can get. Remember, focus should be on your nutrition and sleep until you are at a stage when you can use your pacing strategy to increase your activities again.

While open communication about your illness is usually best, sometimes you may not want people outside your circle of family and friends to know... and this can be challenging if you need to disengage yourself from community commitments.

Keep your details very general and simply tell them that you have had some unexpected family medical issues that need your attention for now and that you'd rather not go into detail. If you think you will be questioned and pressured into staying, you should consider getting a friend or relative to make the announcement for you.

Do not put yourself under any undue stress. There is always someone that can fill in for you and your health is more important than any commitments you may have.

Remember, the quicker you get better, the quicker you'll be able to go back – but only after plenty of rest and recovery based on your pacing strategy.

STAGE 2 - iv) AVOID:

A major part of the second stage of recovery from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is to keep your body as healthy as possible and to avoid infections that will cause further damage to your cells.

Because of your already lowered immune system, you are more susceptible to getting recurring infections. So it is important to avoid situations where you face viral exposure. For example, the common cold virus can stay alive on your hands for up to 3 hours after you have shaken the hand of a contagious carrier.

QUICK TIPS TO AVOID EXPOSURE TO INFECTIONS:

- ▶ Avoid contact with people that are sick
- ▶ Wash your hands before eating
- ▶ Wash your hand before touching your face (especially eyes, nose and mouth)
- ▶ Avoid direct contact with public toilet seats
- ▶ Always wash your hands after using the bathroom and going to public areas
- ▶ Eat a healthy diet rich in vitamin C (use vitamin C supplements if necessary)
- ▶ Avoid crowded places
- ▶ Drink lots of water
- ▶ Get plenty of fresh air
- ▶ Get good quality sleep – every night
- ▶ Don't share cutlery and glasses
- ▶ Avoid buffets and shared food parties
- ▶ Keep wounds covered
- ▶ Avoid contact with children that could be carrying germs from childcare/school
- ▶ Keep hand sanitizer in the car to disinfect hands after touching a shopping cart

Keep in mind that there is no 100% way to avoid infections, but you can minimize your risk by following the tips above. Also, get those around you to do the same.

STAGE 3 - i) ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS:

CABBAGE COMPRESSES:

If you have painful muscles and joints, then a warm cabbage compress may help.

Cabbage contains powerful healing elements such as senaps oil which enhances the circulation of blood to all parts of the body, as well as Vitamin U which helps strengthen the immune system.



Get the raw green outer leaves of a cabbage, cut out the thick stalks and roll them flat with a rolling pin. Lay cabbage leaves between two tea towels and iron so they get quite warm – turn iron off and place heated cabbage leaves on the sore area/s of your body for 15 minutes.

Once you've done this, massage the painful area/s with a mixture of: 3 drops clove oil; 3 drops chamomile oil; 3 drops thyme oil and 1 teaspoon almond oil. (This massage oil blend is quite powerful and should be skin patch tested first to check for possible skin reactions. Place one drop on wrist to test sensitivity before using elsewhere).

NOTE: Never use warm compresses on broken skin and don't heat cabbage so much that you burn your skin.

ACUPUNCTURE:

Acupuncture has been used for thousands of years as part of traditional Chinese medicine. However, it wasn't until 1997 that it became officially recognized as a part of mainstream medicine by the National Institutes of Health. It has been classed as a safe and effective procedure for the treatment of a wide range of conditions, including fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome.

The Acupuncture Associates of Columbia report that:

“Acupuncture is often effective with a wide range of complaints, including chronic fatigue, depression, back pain, joint pain, infertility, asthma, addictions, and stress.

Acupuncture is also helpful for many chronic illnesses and health concerns that have no clear origin or cause. Patients committed to a healthy lifestyle who receive ongoing acupuncture treatment for maintenance and health promotion often experience:

- ▶ Being sick less often and recovering more quickly
- ▶ Improvement of vitality and stamina
- ▶ Being able to take care of their own health
- ▶ Relationships with others deepening and becoming more harmonious
- ▶ Reductions in long term health care costs”

Acupuncture usually needs a number of ongoing treatments to be carried out in order to take full effect. If you are not well enough to go to an acupuncturist, you may be able to find one that will do home visits.

Please note that in the US, most states require acupuncturists to have a license. This is usually identified by the letters “Lac” in their title. To search for an acupuncturist near you in the US, visit: <http://acupuncturists.healthprofs.com>

HOMEOPATHY:

Homeopathy is a natural form of alternative medicine derived from substances that come from plants, minerals, or animals and assists your body to prevent and treat a variety of illnesses and medical conditions.



For example, Sepia200c is homeopathic remedy made from Cuttlefish ink and has been shown to improve mood, boost energy levels and improve muscle pain and stiffness – all common symptoms of CFS!

Homeopathy is based on the principle that “like cures like”. Basically, the premise is that if a potent substance is given to a healthy person and it makes them ill, then if a highly diluted version of the same substance is given to an ill person with the same symptoms, it will actually make them better because it stimulates the body to heal itself.

Founded in Germany in the late 1700's, by Samuel Christian Hahnemann, homeopathic medicine is now commonly practiced throughout the western world.

A registered homeopath will sit down with you and have a lengthy discussion about your health issues, as well as your family medical history. They will analyze your current physical and emotional state and will determine suitable homeopathic medicines based on your individual needs. Thus, even though you may have the same symptoms as another CFS sufferer, you may get very different treatment.

If you are going to include homeopathic medicine in your recovery regime, be sure to let your traditional health care provider know so that you don't compromise the effect of any other medications you may be taking.

HYPNOSIS:

Hypnosis is a “suggestive” form of treatment that deals with the subconscious mind. It is a sleep/trance like state whereby external suggestions can help change behavior, emotions, and a person's physical well-being.

Hypnosis allows you to reprogram your mental and emotional states of mind through the support of your subconscious mind. As your conscious is not being drained by this process you will be left with more energy, better focus and an elevated mood – thereby helping your recovery process.

Self-hypnosis is ideal for those that are unable to consult with a hypnotherapist because of lack of energy, or because they feel more comfortable doing this in the comfort of their own home.

A simple way to use self-hypnosis is by downloading a specific CFS Hypnosis MP3 to your computer and listening to it whilst in a relaxed state. You are 100% in control and will enjoy a very deep state of relaxation.

“Any physical illness or condition including chronic fatigue syndrome will be affected by what the mind does. Your unconscious mind and its attitudes has a direct effect on your blood pressure, immune function and pain response and therefore can be directly influenced by the most powerful way of communicating with unconscious processes-hypnosis.”

To learn more about self-hypnosis for chronic fatigue and to download specific CFS Hypnosis MP3s directly to your computer, visit:

<http://www.hypnosisdownloads.com/downloads/health/chronic-fatigue.html?3983>

MASSAGE:

Massage therapy is an effective form of treatment for CFS sufferers because it is stress reducing and helps aid recovery.

Massage can help:

- ▶ Loosen stiff and sore muscles
- ▶ Increase blood flow and circulation
- ▶ Remove toxins
- ▶ Relax the body and induce better quality sleep
- ▶ Reduce stress levels
- ▶ Boost the immune system

As your body is already under a lot of tension, stress and pain, gentle massage is usually best. Listen to your body's response as you are getting the massage and always give feedback to your therapist about how you are feeling. If the pressure they are using is causing you discomfort, let them know immediately.

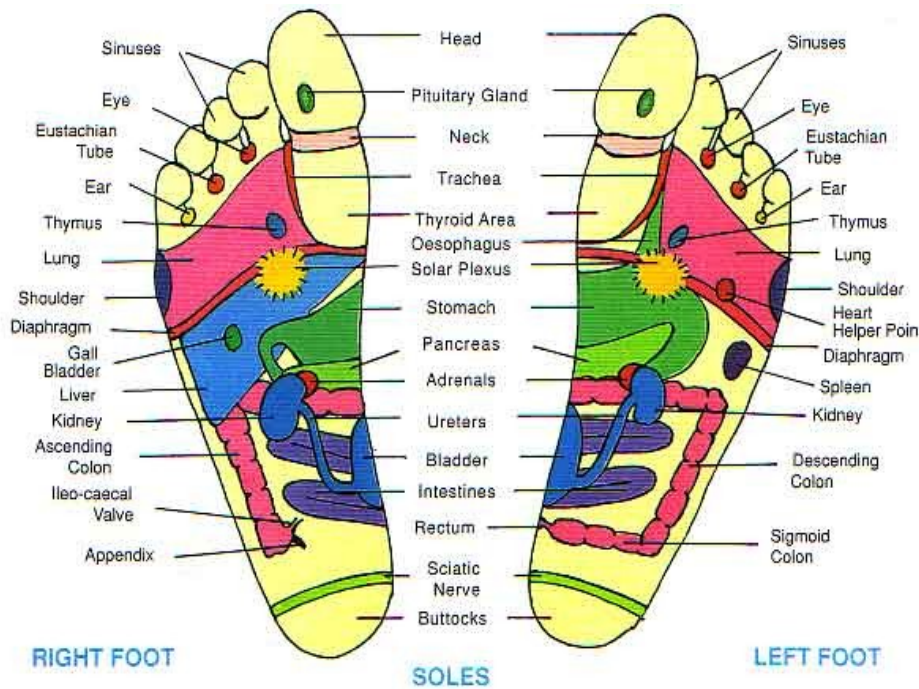
Try to find a reputable massage therapist that specializes in chronic illness therapy (eg. soft tissue therapists). Seek referrals from Chronic Fatigue support groups, your local gymnasium, or even your health food supplier. Anyone interested in alternative therapies should be able to point you in the right direction.

If you find that the massage therapist you have found isn't to your liking, try a different one. It may take several attempts to find the right therapist for you, but when you find a good one you'll instantly recognize the benefits.

Most massage therapists will do in-home massage so you don't have to travel. This will probably be your most preferred form of treatment so you don't have to use up unnecessary energy.

REFELXOLOGY:

Reflexology is an ancient form of treatment which focuses on areas of the feet and hands for healing specific areas of the body. For example, massaging the tips of your big toes can help to alleviate headaches.



A reflexologist can determine which areas need to be treated by analyzing where the tension points of your feet are. By massaging certain areas of the feet, the corresponding part of the body will be stimulated in order to reduce pain or improve the wellness of that area.

Reflexology is also used as a form of massage to help reduce stress and promote relaxation and overall well-being.

It is reported to give more energy, increase stamina, improve sleep, reduce muscle and joint pain, flush toxins and increase your overall "feel good" factor.

CHIROPRACTIC:

Chiropractic treatment involves the “adjustment” of the spine, vertebrae, hips and pelvis in order to bring them back into normal alignment, thereby allowing nerve impulses to freely travel from the brain to the spinal nerves – and ultimately to the rest of your body!



Think of a misalignment like carrying a heavy grocery bag high up in front of you, instead of by your side. It takes a lot more energy and effort to do this and tires you out very quickly. As an example, a similar thing happens if your head is out of alignment or one leg is slightly out and therefore carrying a lot more weight than it should be.

Misalignments are corrected through adjustments (fast and forceful movements done by a chiropractor).

Chiropractic adjustments can help:

- ▶ boost energy through the nervous system
- ▶ decrease muscle pain
- ▶ decrease physical and emotional fatigue
- ▶ loosen stiff and sore muscles
- ▶ increase blood flow and circulation
- ▶ relax the body and induce better quality sleep
- ▶ reduce stress levels
- ▶ boost the immune system

By visiting a professional qualified chiropractor your body can be brought back into balance and allow it to make efficient use of your energy again.

STAGE 3 - ii) HEAVY METALS:

REMOVE METAL DENTAL FILLINGS:

Do you have “silver” amalgam fillings in your teeth? Then you are likely suffering from the negative health effects caused by the mercury they contain.



In fact, while these so-called “silver” fillings do have some silver in them, they actually contain 50% mercury – with large fillings having as much mercury in them as a thermometer!

As long as you have amalgam fillings, they continue to release toxic mercury vapors into your mouth, which in turn get inhaled into your lungs and released into your bloodstream.

Given that mercury is one of the most toxic elements on the planet and that it has been shown to be more toxic than arsenic, it is no wonder that many health issues arise as a result.

While many European countries such as Sweden and Germany have now banned the use of mercury in dental fillings following medical and scientific research, other countries still continue to use them – primarily due to their cheaper cost, and partially due to lack of knowledge.

While such bodies as the American and British Dental Associations still support the use of amalgam fillings, leading international health authorities such as the World Health Organization warn against their use because of the toxic effect they can have and the damage they can cause to the immune system - resulting in a broad range of illnesses (including Chronic Fatigue Syndrome).

Mercury poisoning has been shown to:

- ▶ damage the immune system
- ▶ travel through the bloodstream and kill cells
- ▶ adversely affect the brain (links with autism, Alzheimer's, depression etc)
- ▶ increase allergies
- ▶ lower the amount of oxygen that can be carried by red blood cells
- ▶ impair blood vessels and decrease blood supply to tissues
- ▶ invade every cell in the body (different symptoms for different parts)

The SAFE Process For Having Mercury Based Fillings Removed:

WARNING: Having mercury based fillings removed is a toxic process and must be carried out by a specialized dentist that has the relevant knowledge and procedures in place to prevent any further harm to you.

Most regular dentists do not do this correctly – if they even do it at all! (Look for a natural health orientated or holistic dentist that specializes in amalgam filling removals such as www.holisticdentist.com).



Because the removal process involves disturbing the mercury, large amounts of vapor and drilling debris will be released – you do not want this to enter your body! If done incorrectly it can be more toxic than leaving it in your mouth in the first place.

When looking for a dentist that can carry out the procedure for you, be sure to ask them what their process is before you book in to get this done.

The process should include the following safety procedures:

- ▶ Oxygen mask placed over nose for fresh breathing during removal
- ▶ Vinyl sheet (rubber dam) or loads of cotton placed in mouth to prevent mercury particles from entering mouth and being swallowed
- ▶ High speed vacuum suction to remove debris as old filling is being removed
- ▶ May also use additional vacuum suction for vapor removal
- ▶ Disposable medical gown and covers used to cover hair, face and clothing to prevent contamination
- ▶ Dentist and assistants wearing face masks to protect themselves also
- ▶ Filling being replaced with resin compound that has no mercury!!
- ▶ Heavy metal detoxification program such as use of vitamin c, activated charcoal and chlorella to help boost immune system and remove heavy metals from your body (this may be something you need to do yourself or in addition to whatever your dentist offers you – seek advice from both dentist and health practitioner on dosage of such remedies).

Be sure to ask your dentist as many questions as possible about this procedure and get a second and third opinion if you need to. Think of yourself as an employer that wants to hire the best candidate for the job of removing your amalgam... and only hire the best!

Ask for testimonials and speak to some former patients if you can.

While this is not a procedure to take lightly, it is one that can have a major impact on your life. After my research into amalgam fillings, I came across endless testimonials of people that had suffered from illnesses such as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and fibromyalgia that made astonishing recoveries within weeks of having their mercury based fillings removed. You never know – it may have the same impact for you and is certainly worth investigating!

STAGE 3 - iii) EXERCISE:

GRADED EXERCISE ONLY:

Only once you have reached the “pacing” stage of the recovery plan should you consider adding exercise to your daily activities. And, in keeping with the pacing strategy, the exercise you do should be *graded*.

“Graded” exercise does not mean that someone will give you a score out of 10 for your performance, but rather it is added gradually and paced to fit in with your energy levels and overall recovery plan.

Put simply, graded exercise involves starting at a very slow and low impact level. The level of exercise is increased very carefully and at a very gradual pace.

You must be very strict with your exercise plan and not deviate from it – don't do more exercise on one day just because you feel you have the energy to do so. You need to increase slowly and you must constantly monitor how your body responds, as well as any lag in recovery over the following days.

If you feel your body is not coping with the level of exercise you have increased to, decrease what you are doing immediately so you don't suffer any adverse set-backs.

Don't push yourself and then make yourself feel worse again, this will only bring your symptoms back and could make you feel scared to exercise altogether - when in reality (if implemented correctly) graded exercise can significantly help in the recovery from CFS and give you the increased energy your body has been waiting for.

The key is to stick to your exercise plan and to pace yourself at all times!

If you feel you are unable to create your own exercise plan or that you are unable to monitor your progress yourself, you should consult a physiologist to help.

A simple way to begin your exercise plan is to start with a few minutes of stretching each day.

Once your body is comfortable with this, progress to very gentle exercise such as walking or swimming. For example, you could start by taking a 5 minute walk 3 times a week. Do this for a few weeks and monitor how your body reacts. If you don't feel overtired, increase the number of days you walk on or make the walk a couple of minutes longer... again, listening to your body and pacing yourself at all times.



Remember, never force yourself beyond the planned amount of exercise and monitor your progress before increasing duration or intensity of the activity.

It is important to try and stick to your exercise plan. Even on a bad day, try to at least move a little... this could involve walking around the house or doing a few gentle stretches and breathing exercises whilst lying down.

If you are at a point where you can start to integrate small amounts of exercise, you have reached an important point in your recovery as this is often where CFS sufferers start to see a true light at the end of the tunnel.

REMEMBR: YOU MUST PACE YOURSELF –
ONLY INCREASE ACTIVITY IF YOU FEEL WELL AT REST FOR AT LEAST 4
DAYS AFTER ADDING AN EXTRA ACTIVITY TO YOUR PACING
STRATEGY!!

HOW LONG UNTIL I RECOVER FROM CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME?

Most people that have implemented the various elements of the “feel good again” action plan (in the right order and with strict diligence), have experienced significant improvement within a matter of weeks and months.

The key is to stick with it and to use this plan to find what works best for you.

While the occasional person may never make a total recovery, the symptoms can be well managed by continuing the principles outlined in this book. The biggest thing to remember is to balance your daily activities with a healthy diet, plenty of rest and good sleep.

I wish you all the best with your recovery.