

ME/CFS/PVFS (Myalgic Encephalopathy/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Post Viral Fatigue Syndrome)

Myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME), or **Chronic fatigue syndrome** (CFS) are the most common names given to a variably debilitating disorder or disorders generally defined by persistent fatigue unrelated to exertion, not substantially relieved by rest and accompanied by the presence of other specific symptoms. The disorder may also be referred to as post-viral fatigue syndrome (PVFS, when the condition arises following a flu-like illness) as well as several other terms.

Currently estimated to be 250,000 people in Britain affected by the illness.

All types of people at all ages are affected. Severe and debilitating fatigue, painful muscles and joints, disordered sleep, gastric disturbances, poor memory and concentration are commonplace.

In many cases, onset is linked to a viral infection. Other triggers may include an operation or an accident, although some people experience a slow, insidious onset. In some the effects may be minimal but in a large number, lives are changed drastically: in the young, schooling and higher education can be severely disrupted; in the working population, employment becomes impossible for many.

Social life and family life become restricted and in some cases severely strained. People may be housebound or confined to bed for months or years.

There is currently no accepted cure and no universally effective treatment. Those treatments which have helped reduce particular symptoms in some people have unfortunately proved ineffective or even counterproductive in others. An early diagnosis together with adequate rest during the acute phase and during any relapse appear to bring the most significant improvement.

Like any other medically certified illness, sickness benefits or disability allowances are an important part of ensuring financial stability for people who are disabled by CFS.

Further information

www.meassociation.org.uk - the ME Association offers help and support for all people in the UK who are affected by ME/CFS, while also taking very active parts in the medical, welfare and general national arenas.