

For more information about ME/CFS and the ME/CFS Society (SA) Inc. please complete the following details and post:

Name: _____

Address: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____

ME/CFS Society (SA) Inc.

The ME/CFS Society was formed in the mid-80's to assist people with ME/CFS and their carers. Our goal is to raise awareness about ME/CFS in the community and the medical professions, and to provide support and information to both sufferers and carers. It also promotes and raises money for ME/CFS research.



The Society offers the following services:

A quarterly journal, Talking Point, which provides the latest medical, research and Society news

'1800' Support and Information Line

Education: supporting and promoting General Practitioner seminars, and public information seminars

Adult sufferer support meetings

Youth Support

- *SAYME: Youth magazine, website and social support meetings*
- *Education Support Programme*
- *Duke of Edinburgh Programme*

Website: www.sacfs.asn.au

Advocacy: The Society provides information/support for those who need to deal with schools, the Housing Trust, Centrelink, and other social services.

Contact Details

ME/CFS Society (SA) Inc.

Registered Charity 698

GPO Box 383

Adelaide SA 5001

Office: (08) 8410 8929

Fax: (08) 8410 8931

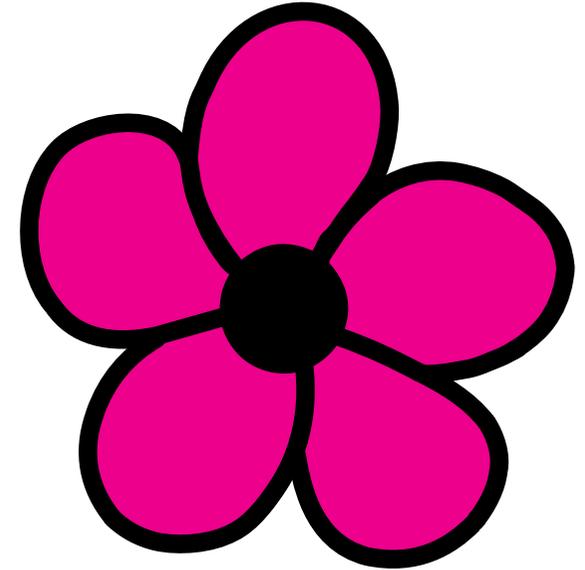
Support and Information Line: 1800 136 626

10am - 4pm, Monday - Friday

Email: sacfs@sacfs.asn.au

Website: <http://www.sacfs.asn.au>

ME / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome



(08) 8410 8930
1800 136 626
www.sacfs.asn.au

What is ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome?

ME/CFS is a debilitating disease that can be triggered by viral infection, chemical exposure or major trauma; the onset may be sudden or gradual. It can affect every system of the body in varying degrees, resulting in a wide range of symptoms. ME/CFS is characterised by *persistent fatigue not alleviated by rest, profound exhaustive fatigue following little exertion (mental and physical), poor memory and concentration, unrefreshing and disrupted sleep*. The causal mechanism and the exact nature of the condition are not understood.

There may be other symptoms such as: *orthostatic intolerance (low blood pressure), fever/chills, headache, sore throat, painful, tender or enlarged lymph glands, muscle and joint aches and pains, and weakness*. Also *forgetfulness, difficulty thinking, irritability, anxiety, reactive depression, insomnia, hyper-somnia, abdominal pain, bowel dysfunction, balance disturbances, dizziness, palpitations, breathing difficulties, as well as sensitivities to light, noise, vibration, foods and certain chemicals*.

The impact of the condition depends to some extent on the severity of the case. At the very minimum people with ME/CFS are restricted in their daily activities; in the more severe cases, disability can extend to sufferers being bedridden and in need of significant personal care.

It is common for people suffering these symptoms to become concerned and feel depressed and anxious about not being able to achieve previous levels of involvement in schooling, work, or social activities. Likewise families find it difficult to understand what is happening to their loved ones. In addition to receiving help from health professionals, the ME/CFS Society (SA) Inc. offers information and support to help people manage their lifestyle.

Diagnosis

Unfortunately there is no diagnostic test for ME/CFS. Upon first developing these symptoms, the doctor, based on the patient's medical history, needs to test for diseases that could also produce similar symptoms. If other diseases are excluded, and the symptoms persist beyond 6 months, the diagnosis of ME/CFS can be made.

Treatments

At present there is no cure for ME/CFS. Treatments are directed towards symptom-relief and improving

functionality. Unfortunately no one treatment has been demonstrated to benefit a significant proportion of people with ME/CFS; patients may need to try different options, to find what helps them best.

What's in a Name?

ME, or *Myalgic Encephalomyelitis*, was first used in 1956 to describe the condition. The name suggests muscle pain and inflammation of the brain - originally thought to be the cause of the illness. In the UK the term *ME* is still used although some groups have moved to the term *Myalgic Encephalopathy* which suggests muscle pain and brain dysfunction.

In 1988 the term *Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS)* was coined. Although this term is a little easier to understand, it has proved unhelpful. In countries such as Australia, where this term has been widely used, it has often generated the perception that the disease is just 'chronic fatigue' when it is actually a multi-symptom illness, and fatigue is not always the most disabling or challenging symptom.

In the USA, the name *CFIDS* or *Chronic Fatigue Immune Deficiency Syndrome*, was adopted based on new theories of the underlying cause of the illness. This is also not considered an accurate description of the disease.

In Australia, most patient groups use the term ME/CFS. Until the underlying cause of the condition is known, it is to be expected that a number of different names will continue to be used to describe it.

Youth Information - SAYME

We recognise the unique and difficult challenges young people with ME/CFS face, and have a youth organisation called SAYME or South Australian Youth with ME/CFS.

SAYME helps to combat the isolation young people with ME/CFS experience; it also aims to keep young people positive about life, encouraging them to be creative and continue their education as much as possible.

SAYME has its own support meetings, magazine and also a website at: <http://www.sayme.org.au>.

It can be contacted on Ph: 0500 523 500 or

Email: sayme@sayme.org.au

Any young person joining the society can simply nominate to be a member of SAYME too, and they will receive the quarterly youth magazine and information on SAYME events.

Please cut along line

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