Risk Factors for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS)

by Amy Scholten, MPH

En Español (Spanish Version)

A risk factor is something that increases your likelihood of getting a disease or condition.

It is possible to develop CFS with or without the risk factors listed below. However, the more risk factors you have, the greater your likelihood of developing CFS. If you have a number of risk factors, ask your doctor what you can do to reduce your risk.

Risk factors for developing CFS may include:

Gender

CFS is diagnosed one and half times more often in women than in men. This may be due to biological, psychological, and/or social influences. For example:

- CFS may have a gender difference.
- Women may be more likely than men to talk with their doctors about CFS-like symptoms.

However, an increasingly diverse patient group seems to be emerging as more doctors recognize CFS as a real medical disorder.

Age

CFS is most common in people between the ages of 20 and 50. It can develop in people of all age groups, including teenagers and young children.

Personality Factors

Some research suggests that people who are highly active and achievement-oriented may be more at risk for developing CFS. However, perhaps this personality type increases the risk only after exposure to new mental stress or viral infections.

REFERENCES:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/.

Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction Syndrome Association of America website. Available at: http://www.cfids.org/.

