Talking to Your Doctor About Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS)

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En Español (Spanish Version)

You have a unique medical history. Therefore, it is essential to talk with your doctor about your personal risk factors and/or experience with CFS. By talking openly and regularly with your doctor, you can take an active role in your care.

General Tips for Gathering Information

Here are some tips that will make it easier for you to talk to your doctor:

- Bring someone else with you. It helps to have another person hear what is said and ask questions you may have forgotten.
- Write out your questions ahead of time, so you don't forget them.
- Write down the answers you get, and make sure you understand what you are told. Ask for clarification, if necessary.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions and get as much information as you need. You have a right to know.

Specific Questions to Ask Your Doctor

About CFS

- What could be causing my symptoms?
- What tests should I get?
- What can I expect during the course of this illness?
- Have you treated other people with chronic fatigue syndrome? If not, can you refer me to a doctor who does?
- Is there any genetic influence which I need to know about?

About Treatment Options

- What treatments are available for CFS?
- Are there medicines I can take? What benefits and side effects can I expect from them?
- Are there alternative or complementary therapies that could help me?
- Are there any counselors who treat people with CFS or similar chronic illnesses?
- Do you know of any support groups for people with CFS?

About Lifestyle Changes

- What changes can I make to reduce my symptoms and enhance my recovery?
  - Dietary changes
  - Exercise
  - Stress management
  - Work and school
  - Daily activities
  - Relationships
  - Sleep and rest

About Outlook

- What are my chances for recovery from CFS?
- How long can I expect to have CFS?
REFERENCES:

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


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