What is Chronic Fatigue Syndrome?

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) is a complicated disorder characterized by extreme fatigue that can't be explained by any underlying medical condition. The fatigue may worsen with physical or mental activity, but doesn't improve with rest.

Chronic fatigue syndrome has eight official signs and symptoms, plus the central symptom that gives the condition its name:

* Fatigue
* Loss of memory or concentration
* Sore throat
* Enlarged lymph nodes in your neck or armpits
* Unexplained muscle pain
* Pain that moves from one joint to another without swelling or redness
* Headache of a new type, pattern or severity
* Unrefreshing sleep
* Extreme exhaustion lasting more than 24 hours after physical or mental exercise

Chronic fatigue syndrome has also been called myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) and, more recently, systemic exertion intolerance disease (SEID). Although CFS/ME and SEID share the same major symptom of chronic fatigue, there is variation between the definitions of these disorders. The symptom of chronic fatigue also may arise from more than one underlying condition.

The cause of chronic fatigue syndrome is unknown, although there are many theories — ranging from viral infections to psychological stress. Some experts believe chronic fatigue syndrome might be triggered by a combination of factors.

There's no single test to confirm a diagnosis of chronic fatigue syndrome. Individuals that believe they have CFS may need a variety of medical tests to rule out other health problems that have similar symptoms. Treatment for chronic fatigue syndrome focuses on symptom relief.

For more information:

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/chronic-fatigue-syndrome/basics/tests-diagnosis/con-20022009>

<http://www.healthline.com/health/chronic-fatigue-syndrome>