

# CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME and FIBROMYALGIA

## WHAT IS IT?

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) is a long-term condition characterized by extreme fatigue, muscle and joint pain, and memory and cognition issues.

Fibromyalgia (FMS) is a related condition involving widespread unexplained musculoskeletal pain, sleep problems, fatigue, and memory and mood issues.

The cause of both CFS/FMS is unknown, but both conditions may be associated with hormonal and immune dysfunction, inflammation, and disordered sleep.

## GENTLE NUTRITION SUGGESTIONS

Follow as you are able.

- Eating regular snacks and meals throughout the day can help give your body the energy it needs. Staying well-hydrated can help reduce fatigue and headaches caused by dehydration.
- Caffeine and alcohol may exacerbate symptoms and contribute to insomnia, so exploring how reducing these items impacts your symptoms could be helpful.
- Some people with CFS/FMS experience food sensitivities. Notice how your body feels after you eat and talk with your dietitian if you notice that a particular food causes symptoms.
- Some nutrients that might be beneficial for this condition are iron, vitamin B12, and zinc. Food sources of iron include meat, seafood, dark leafy greens, and beans and legumes. B12 is found in all animal foods, including beef, shellfish, eggs, and dairy. High zinc sources include shellfish, meat, poultry, and whole grains.

## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Listen to what your body needs and remember that you have unconditional permission to rest! Getting adequate restful sleep can be challenging for many people with CFS/FMS.
- Stress-reduction techniques, such as breathing exercises, meditation, and yoga may be helpful for some people.
- Listen to your body to determine what patterns of movement and/or rest feel most supportive.
- Seek support from friends, family, a support group, and/or a therapist.

\*Do not engage in any of these suggestions if they are harmful to other aspects of your health.

## REMEMBER

We are imperfect beings and each day is new and different. Some days it may be easier to follow the suggestions than others. Be gentle with yourself.

## GOAL

Self-compassion and kindness towards your body.

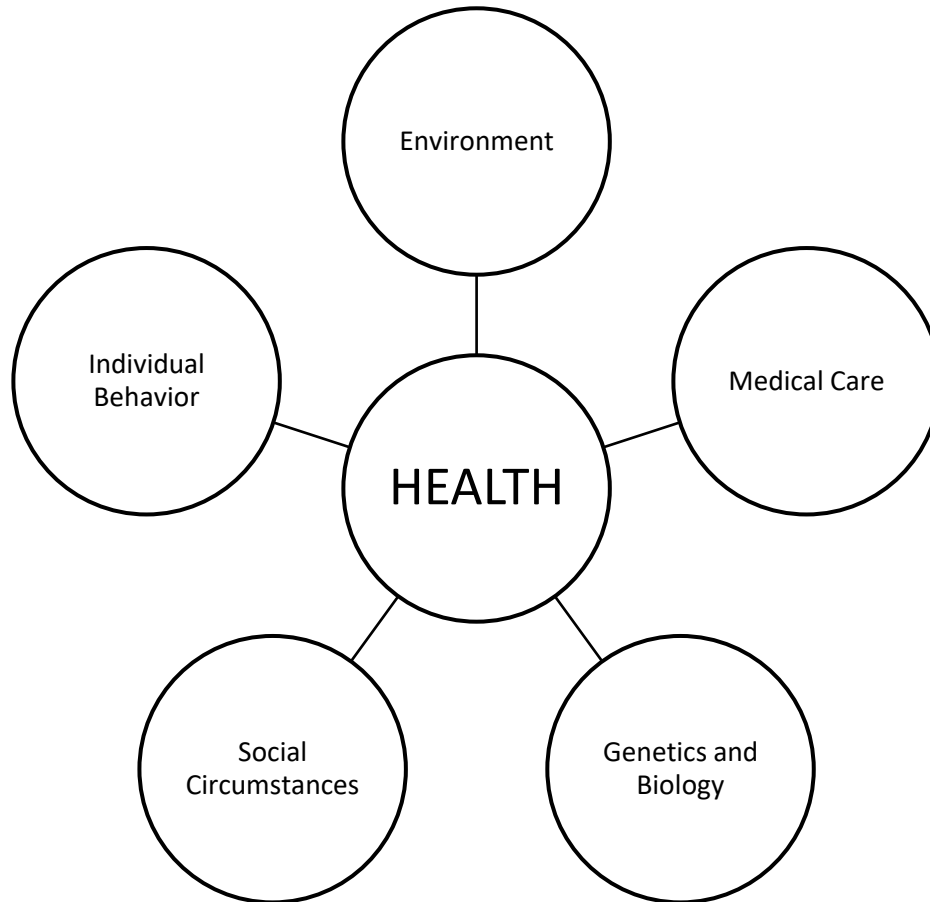
## EVERY BODY IS DIFFERENT

There are a spectrum of symptoms and reactions. If any food or movement recommendations do not feel right for your body, trust that! It may be helpful to talk more about this with your dietitian.

# TOTAL HEALTH

Health is complex and is influenced by many factors. Not all factors are within your control.

It is important to consider all these factors, not just individual behaviors, when exploring ways to address your health.



## REMINDER:

This health condition is not your fault!

Discuss causes and risk factors with your doctor or registered dietitian if you are interested.

Image Description: A series of circles with Health labeled in the center circle. There are five additional circles surrounding the center circle each one connected to the center with a line. The surrounding circles are labeled: Environment, Medical Care, Genetics and Biology, Social Circumstances, and Individual Behavior.

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## REFERENCES

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## DISCLAIMERS

Handout created by Carly Renner, Bastyr University Dietetic Intern and reviewed by Meghan Cichy, Registered Dietitian. Template design by Elisabeth Kelsey, Bastyr Dietetic Intern.

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