



Associated New Zealand Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Society Inc.

Information Sheet # 43:21

CFS/ME and Covid-19

A lot of you have been asking about guidelines for the management of your health during this very difficult and unusual time, as we are all seemingly at risk of this new infection. Because it is so new, the easy answer is that we really do not know how this infection is likely to impact on those with CFS/ME. Below are a few of the questions I am being asked and I will try to answer them. I do have a list of websites from around the world in relation to these issues. They may vary a little in the advice offered. But just use common sense. Remember you know your body better than anyone else!

1. *Am I more likely to be at risk of Covid-19 if I have CFS/ME?*

No-one really knows for sure as this is all so new. In general, many with CFS/ME, often with an over-activated immune system, seem protected against everyday bugs, so the risk may be small.

2. *If I do get covid-19 will it be more severe because I have CFS/ME?*

Not necessarily so, unless you already have breathing, cardiovascular or kidney problems. If you do succumb, common sense advice would be to seek medical advice early and make sure someone checks up on you regularly. Also go to bed and rest up.

3. *If I do get Covid-19 will this cause a relapse of my CFS/ME?*

It is possible, as any infection poses this risk for you. Again, give in, go to bed and seek medical help. Also, when you are recovering do not try to do too much, as this could stir up your CFS/ME symptoms.

4. *Can Covid-19 cause CFS/ME?*

CFS/ME can certainly be as a result of any infection (particularly viral). A prolonged post-

viral phase may occur after Covid-19, which can lead on finally to a diagnosis of CFS/ME. (Known as Long-haul Covid)

5. *Should I have an influenza immunisation?*

This is wise, unless you have had a bad reaction to one in the past. Influenza can cause you to become very run down, and more likely then to succumb to Covid-19 if you have contact with that illness.

6. *Is there any special treatment I should add to my regular regime?*

Keep going with all your regular medication. Eat sensibly and regularly, with plentiful fruit and veg. Take care not to over-exercise, but make sure you get your daily dose of fresh air. Stress and poor sleep can lower your resistance, so keep working on these aspects of your wellbeing.

7. *Is there any vaccine or drug treatment for Covid-19?*

A vaccine is now available. As this is not a live vaccine, reactions are rare, but prepare for vaccination by allowing quiet time for 2 days before and 2 days afterwards to minimise ill effects. If you do suffer from allergies, take an antihistamine an hour before the vaccination, and stay at the vaccine centre for one hour.

The good news which we must all cling to as a result of this terrible pandemic, is that there will be an upsurge in research into immunology, biochemistry and virology. The outcome of all that may provide a greater in-depth understanding of CFS/ME and its potential treatment.

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Useful websites from around the world in relation to CFS/ME and Covid-19

Inst Neuro-immune Medicine, Florida, USA - Dr Nancy Klimas video:

<https://solvecfs.org/covid-19-me-cfs-nsu-institute-for-neuro-immune-medicine-nancy-klimas-m-d/>

ME Association (UK)

<https://www.meassociation.org.uk/2020/03/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-government-advice-and-what-it-means-for-people-with-me-cfs-17-march-2020/>

<https://www.meassociation.org.uk/2020/03/me-association-guidance-coronavirus-covid-19-and-me-cfs-by-dr-charles-shepherd-16-march-2020/>

Bateman Horne Centre, USA - Information for doctors

<http://batemanhorncenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Medical-Care-Considerations-Letter-Final.pdf>

Emerge, Australia

<https://www.emerge.org.au/blog/corona-virus-and-me>

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