



## spotlight on health

### CFIDS Is More Than Just Fatigue

(NAPSA)—People who have heard of chronic fatigue syndrome, also called chronic fatigue and immune dysfunction syndrome (CFIDS), often think that it is just “being tired.” Nothing could be further from the truth.

An estimated 800,000 American men, women and children suffer from this devastating medical condition, which can involve symptoms so severe that they make living a normal life impossible.

To meet the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s criteria for CFIDS, the fatigue must be debilitating, of new onset, last for at least six months and not be relieved by rest. Other symptoms may include extreme muscle and joint pain, headaches, tender lymph nodes and cognitive problems. Although there is no known cause or cure, research so far has revealed some important facts:

- **It’s real.** Over the past 15 years, scientists have identified numerous biological abnormalities in CFIDS patients. One theory is that the illness is rooted in the central nervous and immune systems.

- **It’s serious.** Some cases are mild, but other patients are completely homebound. Some people recover, some remit and relapse and some gradually get worse.

- **It’s underdiagnosed.** Perhaps because CFIDS mimics other diseases, fewer than 10 percent of those with the condition have been diagnosed by a medical practitioner.



**Studies show chronic fatigue syndrome strikes people of all ages, races and backgrounds.**

- **It’s not psychological.** Scientists have proven that CFIDS is not “all in the head” or a sign of laziness.

- **It crosses all boundaries.** Studies show it strikes men and women of all ages, ethnic and socioeconomic groups.

- **It’s a public health problem.** CFIDS is 25 times more common among women than AIDS.

Many people with CFIDS are asking their legislators to support more federal funding for CFIDS research. Anyone can write to the U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510 and the House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515

If you believe you have the symptoms of CFIDS, you can learn more about the illness from The CFIDS Association of America online at [www.cfids.org](http://www.cfids.org) or at 1-800-442-3437.