

CANADIAN CLINICAL CRITERIA (abbreviated version) 2003

It is recommended that this tick chart be used in the initial consultation to assist with a possible diagnosis of ME/CFS. (NB: Sections 1 to 6 must all be met as indicated below)

1) Post-Exertional Malaise and Fatigue:

(All criteria in this section must be met)

- a) The patient must have a marked degree of new onset, unexplained, persistent, or recurrent physical and mental fatigue that substantially reduces activity level
- b) Post-exertional fatigue, malaise and/or pain, and a delayed recovery period (more than 24 hours to recover)
- c) Symptoms can be exacerbated by exertion or stress of any kind

2) Sleep Disorder:

(This criterion must be met)

Unrefreshing sleep or altered sleep pattern (including circadian rhythm disturbance)

3) Pain:

(This criterion must be met)

Arthralgia and/or myalgia without clinical evidence of inflammatory responses of joint swelling or redness, and/or significant headaches of new type, pattern, or severity

4) Neurological/Cognitive Manifestations:

(Two or more of the following criteria must be met)

- a) Impairment of concentration and short-term memory
- b) Difficulty with information processing, categorizing, and work retrieval, including intermittent dyslexia
- c) There may be an overload phenomena: information, cognitive, and sensory overload (e.g. photophobia and hypersensitivity to noise) and/or emotional overload which may lead to relapses and/or anxiety
- d) Perceptual/sensory disturbances
- e) Disorientation or confusion
- f) Ataxia

5) Autonomic/Neuroendocrine/Immune Manifestations:

(At least one symptom in at least two of the following three categories must be met):

A) Autonomic Manifestations:

- 1) Orthostatic Intolerance (e.g. neurally mediated hypotension (NMH))
- 2) Postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS)
- 3) Vertigo and/or light-headedness
- 4) Extreme pallor
- 5) Intestinal or bladder disturbances with or without irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) or bladder dysfunction
- 6) Palpitations with or without cardiac arrhythmia
- 7) Vasomotor instability
- 8) Respiratory irregularities

B) Neuroendocrine Manifestations:

- 1) Loss of thermostatic stability
- 2) Heat/cold intolerance
- 3) Anorexia or abnormal appetite, weight change
- 4) Hypoglycemia
- 5) Loss of adaptability and tolerance for stress, worsening of symptoms with stress and slow recovery, and emotional lability

C) Immune Manifestations:

- 1) Tender lymph nodes
- 2) Recurrent sore throat
- 3) Flu-like symptoms and/or general malaise
- 4) Development of new allergies or changes in status of old ones
- 5) Hypersensitivity to medications and/or chemicals

6) The illness persists for at least 6 months:

(This criterion must be met)

NB: ME/CFS usually has an acute onset, but onset may also be gradual. A preliminary diagnosis may be possible in the early stages. The disturbances generally form symptom clusters that are often unique to a particular patient. The manifestations may fluctuate and change over time.