

Avoid Unreliable Sources of Information.

- Be aware that well meaning friends or relatives may make recommendations or comments which are totally inappropriate.
- Internet sites, particularly where sponsored by food supplements or drug companies, or from the USA.
- Avoid making a diagnosis yourself; leave this to the health professionals.

Employment Issues

Do not continue to work if you are ill. Claim statutory sick pay at first by self-certification, and then by sick notes from your doctor. This is because if your problem turns out to be a fatigue syndrome, continuing to work may push you past the point at which you may fully recover.

We find that in many cases, the unpredictability of the illness is incompatible with what an employer would reasonably expect, as no guarantee can be given about fitness to work at any one time or the quality of work that can be expected.

Employers are firstly sympathetic, but when it becomes clear that the illness may last a long time. problems occur. Take careful advice from your union, solicitor and doctor. No one should resign or accept an offer without professional guidance. In most cases an occupational pension or state benefits are paid.

In some cases light work may be possible with reduced hours, but it needs a protected environment supervised to avoid a relapse, as stress of any kind could hinder recovery.

School or College issues.

No one should be forced to attend who is ill. Games and physical activity are inappropriate. Attendance may be limited or a home tutor may be needed. Cooperation of the school, teachers, doctor and parents is essential. Contact us for further assistance and information.

General Advice.

Please comply with the wishes of your doctors and be patient. Sometimes can take up to a year to before answers your problems are found.

If your problem turns out to be something other than a fatigue syndrome, we will pass you on to an organisation who can help. Very often these other causes of fatigue can be treated successfully.

If your problem turns out to be a fatigue syndrome, we will offer you membership and access to all our services.

Further contacts

Leger ME Helpline: 01302 787353.

Website: www.leger.me.uk
Email: mike@danum.me.uk



Leger-ME:

*Supporting Myalgic Encephalopathy or Encephalomyelitis (ME),
Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS),
Post Viral Fatigue Syndrome (PVFS),
Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS), Patients & Carers*

FirstContact Information.

This leaflet contains information for people who have a suspected or unconfirmed diagnosis of a 'Fatigue Syndrome', and is for people who will have experienced some unexplained form of ill health themselves, or in someone else.

They will have been doing their own research via the libraries, internet, friends or magazines, and will be seeking reassurance.

Why this leaflet ?

Many people contact Leger ME for assistance in dealing with their health problems prior to formal diagnosis by a doctor. Until a formal diagnosis is obtained, Leger ME cannot really give guidance or information for the condition itself. This is because if we did so, we could delay or prevent early medical intervention which could cause harm or give wrong advice.

Where fatigue syndromes are concerned, there is no single or definite diagnostic test which can give a positive diagnosis. Most patients are diagnosed by the absence of other medical conditions which may be similar to a Fatigue Syndrome. Part of the diagnostic criteria involves a 3-6 month wait. Many people will have had a battery of tests done by their G.P., which will have come back negative or within normal limits.

Naturally many will feel frustrated at the lack of progress, and many turn to complementary and alternative medicine. This itself can be hazardous. Your doctor may be treating you symptomatically, where the treatment is aimed at the symptom rather than the underlying cause. Sometimes a diagnosis can only be clarified by observation and waiting.

Our main job at Leger ME is to give you assistance and guidance to help your doctor clarify the diagnosis, or direct you to someone who can. We can offer various support options like Counselling, Listening Service, Lifestyle and General Health guidance.

The First Interview.

The first interview may take place over the telephone, by a visit or preferably at the Redmond Centre, Carcroft.

The first thing we will do is ask you about what has happened so far. This will include information about yourself, your home life, and things that have happened in the past. We will also ask about your current problem, what has happened so far, who you have seen. You are welcome to ask us any questions you like. It is useful to bring any letters, reports or medicines you are currently taking.

We will ask you questions which will enable us to find out what help you may need now and in the foreseeable future. What will happen then is we will suggest an action plan.

We may:

- a) Give you a note and information to take back to your doctor.
- b) We may signpost you to other services or agencies who may be able to help with a particular problem we have identified.
- c) Write a support letter on your behalf.
- d) Offer further appointments.
- e) Refer you to our counselling service.
- f) Recommend you apply for various welfare or state benefits.
- g) Recommend other courses of action we feel that it is in your best interest to follow.
- h) Contact someone else for information on your behalf.
- i) Inform you we cannot help. We will tell you why and may refer you to someone else.

This service is carried out by volunteers goodwill and there are a number of ground rules we have to observe for our protection as well as yourself:

- a) The house rules of the Redmond Centre, including signing in, parking and fire prevention are observed.
- b) We operate a strict no smoking policy.
- c) We will not deal with anyone who is abusive, drunk, disorderly or appears under the influence of illegal drugs.
- d) We will respect and preserve the confidentiality of your case unless:
 - i) We believe there is a serious risk of self harm or harm to another person.
 - ii) We are obliged to by law.
 - iii) Service, Professional, Medical or Legal protocols dictate otherwise.

Any complaints will be dealt with by the Leger ME Committee.

What you could do to help yourself now.

- a) Stop smoking if you do. There is plenty of information around.
- b) Stop using illegal drugs as these may have an adverse affect on your health.
- c) Try to keep your weight within the recommended guidelines.
- d) Follow the recommended guidelines for diets. Avoid junk food, high carbohydrate and other undesirable food.
- e) Keep a medical diary of your problems and actions. This may be useful for your doctor or advisor later.