

CYSTIC FIBROSIS



DEFINITION:

Cystic fibrosis is a congenital disease of the exocrine glands primarily affecting the gastrointestinal and respiratory systems. The lungs, pancreas, intestines, and sweat glands are primarily the affected organs.

Cystic fibrosis is currently the most common fatal disease in the United States. The median age of survival for a person with cystic fibrosis is 31 years.

Cystic fibrosis affects approximately 30,000 children and young adults. It occurs in approximately one in every 3,300 live births.

In about 10% of cases, the diagnosis of cystic fibrosis is not made until the student is in the late teens.

SYMPTOMS:

- High concentration of sodium and chloride in sweat
- Persistent coughing, wheezing, or pneumonia
- Excessive appetite but poor weight gain
- Production of abnormally thick mucus
- Progressive lung damage

TREATMENT:

- Postural drainage (also called chest physical therapy) requires vigorous movement (by using cupped hands) on the back and chest to dislodge thick mucus from the lungs.
- Antibiotics are used to treat lung infections and are administered intravenously, via pills, and/or medicated vapors which are inhaled to open up clogged airways.
- When the digestive system is affected, the body does not absorb enough nutrients. An enriched diet (high caloric, fat, and protein) and twice the recommended daily allowance of vitamins and enzymes are recommended.

COMMONLY USED MEDICATIONS:

- Pulmozyme (mucus-thinning drug)
- Ibuprofen (anti-inflammatory)
- TOBI (tobramycin solution for inhalation)
- Phenylbutyrate (remedy metabolic disorders)

HELPFUL HINTS:

- Encourage students with cystic fibrosis to cough out the mucus in their lungs. Other students in class need to understand that cystic fibrosis is not a communicable disease.
- Be prepared that the diet of students with cystic fibrosis may cause frequent trips to the restroom.
- Allow students with cystic fibrosis to take prescribed medications during class after written medical approval.
- Take precautions to minimize respiratory infections (i.e., weather conditions, proper clothing, taking of medications).
- Encourage these student's to take fluid before, during, and after exercise.
- Obtain physician's approval before student participates in any activity.

CONTRAINDICATED ACTIVITIES:

- Water diving
- Highly competitive sports where exercise pressures are beyond a safe level for the student

Information on this sheet contains only suggested guidelines. Each student must be considered individually, and in many cases, a physician's written consent should be obtained.