

STUDENT NAME:

WHAT WORD DESCRIBES YOU?

HELLO

A Guide to Cystic Fibrosis (CF) for Teachers of Students With CF

Learn about CF, how it impacts different parts of the body, and how you can support your student with CF in a school setting.



About CF

Understanding the basics

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is a rare genetic disease that's typically diagnosed at birth. CF occurs when a child inherits 2 abnormal copies of a specific gene called the cystic fibrosis transmembrane conductance regulator (CFTR) gene—one from each parent.

CF is a buildup of mucus that becomes thick and sticky in different organ systems of the body. It mainly affects the lungs and digestive system, where the mucus can lead to severe respiratory problems and make it difficult to digest and absorb nutrients from food. People with CF are also more vulnerable to getting sick because the buildup of thick, sticky mucus traps bacteria and can lead to infections.

People with CF experience a variety of symptoms and may require many different medications to help manage their condition.

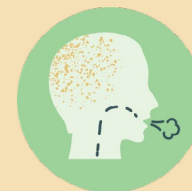
Common symptoms of CF



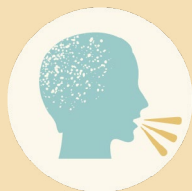
Difficulty gaining weight



Wheezing



Shortness of breath



Constant cough with thick mucus production



Bowel disturbances (e.g., constipation or frequent stools)



Frequent chest infections (including pneumonia)

How CF Impacts the Body

This illustration shows how CF affects different parts of the body and provides some additional symptoms and behaviors you might notice during a student's time at school. Your student's parent or caregiver can provide further guidance on any needed accommodations.



Sweat Glands

People with CF lose more salt than normal when they sweat. Losing too much salt can lead to dehydration. Some people with CF may experience:

- Fatigue
- Muscle cramps



Sinuses

Bacteria can get trapped in the sticky mucus and cause sinus infections. Some people with CF may experience:

- Headaches
- Thick nasal secretions



Lungs

CF causes mucus in the lungs to be thick, sticky, and very difficult to clear. Some people with CF may experience:

- Coughing, which helps to clear lungs
- Shortness of breath



Gastrointestinal Tract and Pancreas

Thick fluids block passages in the pancreas that release enzymes. Without enzymes, food digestion and nutrient absorption are difficult. Some people with CF may experience:

- Stomachache or abdominal pain
- Gas or bloating

What to Keep in Mind as an Educator

- Provide the student's parent and/or caregiver with the appropriate medication forms if required by your school
- Share necessary homework with the student if they need to miss class because of a hospital visit or treatment
- Let your student snack and take any necessary supplements or enzymes throughout the day to help support their nutrition intake and digestion. If your school requires enzymes to be kept at the nurse's office, have a plan in place to allow them to access their medications as needed without cutting into their social time like lunch or recess
- Your student may also need to take frequent bathroom breaks, so make sure they feel comfortable going to the bathroom when needed
- Work with your student and their caregiver to understand if they need accommodations like extra time to eat lunch or allowances for more frequent absences or medical treatments
- Not every student with cystic fibrosis (CF) will need the same level of support, but for some students, it may be helpful to develop an **Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan** ahead of the school year to ensure their needs are being met
- If another student with CF is currently attending your school, please let the student's parent and/or caregiver know, so they can make the necessary arrangements
 - Medical studies show that people with CF are at particular risk of spreading certain germs among others with CF

GET TO KNOW YOUR STUDENT WITH CF

Favorite activities: _____

Additional notes and considerations: _____

For more information on CF and how to provide care for your student through different life stages, visit Everyday-CF.com/Caregiving.

