Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Could Be Triggered by An Overactive Immune System

An overactive response from the immune system might have something to do with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, according to a study published in the journal *Psychoneuroendocrinology*. Patients with Hepatitis C infections were treated with injections of interferon alpha, a naturally-occurring protein known for provoking an immune response. This treatment is normally associated with feelings of fatigue, but a third (18) of the 55 people observed in this study had fatigue levels higher than normal six months later, which is termed "persistent fatigue," a precursor to chronic fatigue syndrome. According to lead researcher Dr. Alice Russell from King's College London,

> *For the first time, we have shown that people who are prone to develop a CFS-like illness have an overactive immune system, both before and during a challenge to the immune system. Our findings suggest that people who have an exaggerated immune response to a trigger may be more at risk of developing CFS."*

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Chronic Fatigue and the Immune System

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), or myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME), is characterized by tiredness that isn't improved with rest and persists for more than six months. Scientists and doctors haven't been able to pinpoint the cause of chronic

fatigue syndrome. It all begins with the microbiome. That also pertains to the immune system. Those who experienced an immune response were more likely to exhibit the precursors of chronic fatigue syndrome. The microbiome controls the immune system. There is a connection between our microbiome and CFS. Researchers at Cornell University discovered a link between inflammation, a lack of gut microbe diversity, and CFS. Another study from Columbia University detected elevated levels of certain bacterias in chronic fatigue sufferers. There is definitely a link between an unbalanced microbiome and CFS. That could also provide an explanation for the connections being made between the immune system and the condition. It's all connected.

CFS and Women

We may not know what causes chronic fatigue, but we do know who it affects. Women are 2 to 4 times more likely to develop CFS than men. That's true of most autoimmune disorders, and this study brings up a potential reason for that. Estrogen increases immune system activity while testosterone does the opposite. In fact, testosterone turns on a specific gene that decreases the immune system's response. That supports the new research here. If an immune response is a factor in developing chronic fatigue syndrome, it would make sense that those who experience more immune responses are more likely to develop CFS.

Related:*How to Detoxify and Heal the Lymphatic System*

Dig A Little Deeper

The immune response itself is not the cause of CFS. Only a third of those provoked in this study reported persistent fatigue. There's also the fact that an immune response can be a good thing. There are microbes we want the immune system to respond to, keeping us from getting sick. But an immune system

that’s constantly on alert creates stress on multiple body systems. Eventually, the immune system will falter.

For more on the immune system, check out: *Make Your Immune System Bulletproof with These Natural Remedies*

Editor’s Note:

I don’t really buy into the concept of an “overactive immune system.” When someone has this condition, in almost every case, the gut is unwell and is leaking undigested proteins, chemicals, and pathogens into the bloodstream. I recommend *How To Heal Your Gut* for anyone dealing with an autoimmune condition.

Sources:

- *Chronic fatigue syndrome ‘could be triggered by overactive immune system’* – The Guardian
- *Clues to chronic fatigue syndrome in overactive immune response* – Medical Xpress
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