**Cystic fibrosis fact sheet**

***Fast facts***

* About 30,000 people are living with cystic fibrosis (CF) (70,000 worldwide).[[1]](#footnote-1)
* Most commonly, CF affects individuals who are from Northern European or United Kingdom descent and is rarely seen in other ethnic groups.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* Genetic carriers for cystic fibrosis have one faulty copy and one working copy of the CFTR gene and do not display symptoms of the condition.[[3]](#footnote-3)

***What is cystic fibrosis?***

# Cystic fibrosis (CF), is an genetic disease caused by two copies of the defective CF gene being passed down, one from each parent. CF affects individuals differently on a case to case basis, however, in general it causes mucus to build up in the lungs and sweat glands, trapping bacteria, which can lead to reoccurring lung infections, limitation of one’s ability to breathe and eventually respiratory failure. CF can also affect the pancreas as mucus blocks the release of enzymes used by the body to break down food.

Common symptoms of CF include persistent coughing, salty-tasting skin, frequent lung infections, shortness of breath and male infertility. CF can drastically affect an individual’s quality of life as it must be managed daily. Treatments for CF include airway clearance techniques, pancreatic enzyme supplements and nebulizers. Daily routines like frequently washing hands, not smoking, drinking lots of fluid, chest physical therapy and maintaining a healthier diet help to keep the disease under control and prevent infections.

Currently there is no cure for CF, however, research and improved services in quality of care continue to improve the length of life for individuals with the disease.

***Related content from the journal* CHEST**

* [Pulmonary Disease Due to Nontuberculous Mycobacteria: Current State and New Insights](http://journal.publications.chestnet.org/article.aspx?articleid=2422757&resultClick=24)
* [The Role of Ivacaftor in Severe Cystic Fibrosis in a Patient With the R117H Mutation](http://journal.publications.chestnet.org/article.aspx?articleid=2431978&resultClick=24)
* [The Evolution of Cystic Fibrosis Care](http://journal.publications.chestnet.org/article.aspx?articleid=2203766&resultClick=24)
* [Changing Epidemiology of the Respiratory Bacteriology of Patients with Cystic Fibrosis](http://journal.publications.chestnet.org/article.aspx?articleid=2411214&resultClick=24)

***Additional resources***

* [CFF—About Cystic Fibrosis](https://www.cff.org/What-is-CF/About-Cystic-Fibrosis/)

* [NIH—Living With Cystic Fibrosis](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/cf/livingwith)
1. Cystic Fibrosis Foundation: [About Cystic Fibrosis](https://www.cff.org/What-is-CF/About-Cystic-Fibrosis/). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Genetics Home Reference: Cystic fibrosis. What is Cystic Fibrosis? August 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Centre for Genetics Education: [Cystic Fibrosis Facts](http://www.genetics.edu.au/Publications-and-Resources/Genetics-Fact-Sheets/FactSheetCysticFibrosis). Fact Sheet 41. November 25, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)