
What if there is more than one student with CF in the same school?

Though CF is not contagious to those who do not already have the disease, those with CF are at particular risk of spreading certain germs among others with CF. This is known as cross-infection. However, there are steps that can be taken to lower this risk:

1. Minimize the time that two people with CF can spend in one place. A minimum 6-foot distance should be maintained at all times.
2. Encourage parents to talk to their CF center
3. Encourage everyone to wash or clean their hands.
4. Encourage everyone to cover their cough.
5. Encourage everyone to get vaccinated.

Resources

UF Health Pediatric Pulmonary Clinic:
(352) 273-8380

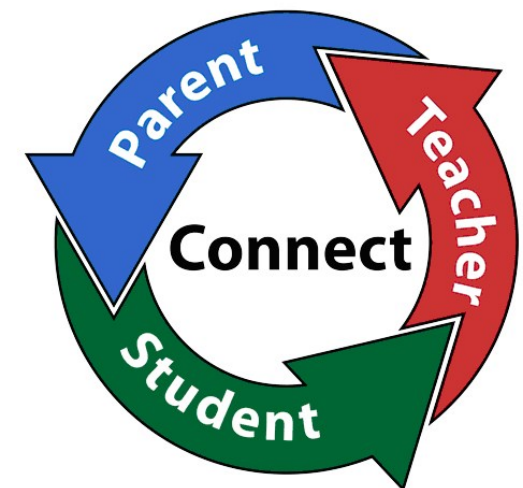
The CF Foundation:
(800) FIGHT CF or **info@cff.org**

Americans with Disabilities Act
(ADA): **(800) 514-0301** or
www.usdoj.gov/disabilities.htm

National Information Center
for Children and Youth with
Disabilities: **www.nichcy.org**



CF & School: What Educators Should Know



What is Cystic Fibrosis?

CF is a chronic, inherited disease that affects the lungs and digestive system. The basic problem in CF is an error in the salt and water exchange in some cells. This causes the body to make thick, sticky mucus, which clogs the lungs and pancreas. Children with CF benefit from a 504 plan or IEP.

What does CF look like?

CF affects each child differently. The lung disease in CF can cause the child to cough frequently, in order to clear lung mucus. If the coughing disrupts class, the child could leave for a drink of water. The child may cough up some mucus and want a box of tissues in their desk or backpack. CF is not contagious. Coughing helps to keep lungs clear and should not be discouraged.

Due to hospitalizations and clinic visits, children with CF may miss a number of days of school. This information should be reflected in their IEP or 504 plan and should be accommodated accordingly (e.g. provisions for assistance making up missed schoolwork or exams).

Nutrition

Thick mucus also clogs the pancreas and blocks digestion. To treat this, oral pancreatic enzymes are taken just before all meals and snacks. Oral pancreatic enzymes are not addictive and will not change the child's behavior. Pancreatic enzymes do not cause a problem if taken by another child.

Most children with CF have been taking pancreatic enzymes since infancy and can take them on their own. Teachers and parents can work together to make a medicine schedule for school. The child, school nurse, teacher, or office staff can administer the enzymes. The right dose helps digestion and food absorption.

Children with CF need a high-calorie/ high-protein diet and enzymes to gain weight and grow. They need high-fat foods, which are often discouraged for the general public. They may take longer to eat and need more food. Extra snacks at school may be needed to increase calories. Higher body weights is associated with better lung function. Good nutrition also helps physical activity.



How does CF affect students in school?

When children forget to take their enzymes or do not take enough, they may need to go to the bathroom more often, have stomach pain, or have foul-smelling gas. The child with CF should always feel free to leave for the bathroom to prevent embarrassment because of lung or stomach symptoms.

For children with CF, exercise also helps clear mucus and increase lung muscle strength. Children with CF can and should be included in all games and activities. From day to day, CF may limit how much they can do or how long they can do it.

Children with CF lose more salt when they sweat than children without CF. They must replace salt and fluid when exercising. Salt can be replaced by eating high-salt foods like pretzels or potato chips. Children with CF should drink fluids before, during, and after exercise. During aerobic exercise, it is estimated they should drink 6 to 12 ounces of fluid every 20 to 30 minutes. Sports drinks, with the added carbohydrates and salt, are great for children with CF to drink while playing sports.