

# Abstract

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## Nutritional strategies for treating chronic fatigue syndrome.

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**BACKGROUND:** Despite considerable worldwide efforts, no single etiology has been identified to explain the development of chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS). It is likely that multiple factors promote its development, sometimes with the same factors both causing and being caused by the syndrome.

**DISCUSSION:** A detailed review of the literature suggests a number of marginal nutritional deficiencies may have etiologic relevance. These include deficiencies of various B vitamins, vitamin C, magnesium, sodium, zinc, L-tryptophan, L-carnitine, coenzyme Q10, and essential fatty acids. Any of these nutrients could be marginally deficient in CFS patients, a finding that appears to be primarily due to the illness process rather than to inadequate diets. It is likely that marginal deficiencies not only contribute to the clinical manifestations of the syndrome, but also are detrimental to the healing processes.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Therefore, when feasible, objective testing should identify them and their resolution should be assured by repeat testing following initiation of treatment. Moreover, because of the rarity of serious adverse reactions, the difficulty in ruling out marginal deficiencies, and because some of the therapeutic benefits of nutritional supplements appear to be due to pharmacologic effects, it seems rational to consider supplementing CFS patients with the nutrients discussed above, along with a general high-potency vitamin/mineral supplement, at least for a trial period.

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