

The Massachusetts CFIDS/ME & FM Association does not assume any responsibility for the outcome of treatments or other self-care strategies described in any of the listed books, that might be undertaken by readers and we recommend individuals always consult with their healthcare providers before trying any new treatment, supplement, or healthcare product.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome: A Treatment Guide, 2nd Edition by Erica F. Verrillo, 2012, E-book format

One of the many challenges of dealing with CFS/ME is the huge amount of sometimes conflicting information about the disease available from a large number of disparate sources. Sorting through the studies about, treatments for, and various approaches to the illness found on the Internet and elsewhere can be a challenge even for someone not dealing with effects of the disease.

For those of us looking for answers while living with CFS/ME or living with someone who suffers from it, the task can be especially daunting. For that reason alone, the recently published *Chronic Fatigue Syndrome: A Treatment Guide, 2nd Edition* by Erica F. Verrillo (only available in e-book format from Amazon) is an invaluable resource.

The ten well-written, well-researched and well-thought out chapters address all the important issues from definition to diagnosis to treatment. Each section is designed to be read as a whole, or in small "brain-fog" sized chunks. There is a summary of the topic at the beginning of each section and resources for in-depth research at the end.

The first three chapters present the various protocols for diagnosis, treatment approaches and a list of symptoms. There is a wealth of valuable information here. If you're like most patients though, you turn right to the treatment sections. If you have CFS/ME you want to know everything about anything that can help.

The author sums up her approach to treatment this way: "...CFS/ME [is] a form of systemic damage that must be gradually, methodically, and thoughtfully repaired. Or, to use an analogy, if CFS/ME is like falling into a hole...recovery is like climbing out of the hole, step by step, rung by rung."

The treatment sections follow this step-by-step approach. In the section on pharmaceuticals, each medication is described—what it is, and what it's supposed to do—the pros and cons of use are presented as well as protocols and patient reviews. The section on nutritional supplements and botanicals details their uses and includes further reading and research. In each of the chapters the treatments are not rated or critiqued. The latest comprehensive information is presented but it's up to the reader to determine what may be most useful to him or her.

As the author notes in her introduction, while much has changed since the first edition of this book was published in 1998, too much hasn't changed. There are still no diagnostic tests for CFS/ME and no cure. Controversy still rages over the very name of the illness. Verrillo's book is an essential, encyclopedic resource of approaches, possible causes, and helpful treatments as well as a guide to the latest thinking about this maddening, mysterious disease.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia and Other Illnesses—The Comprehensive Guide, by Katrina Berne, Ph.D., 2001, ISBN: 0897932803

This is one of the best regarded, all-inclusive books which covers diagnosis, theories, research, and overall management of CFS/CFIDS/ME and FM. Good attention and detail is given to the various detectable abnormalities and diagnostic techniques/ tests used, symptoms and groups of symptoms, things in common but also differences between these illnesses. It also provides a reasonably good overview of treatments (conventional and alternative methods), at least up to those available at the time of publication.

What makes this book unique and particularly helpful is the advice given about practical lifestyle modifications and coping strategies, as the author is a licensed clinical psychologist who treats patients with these illnesses. Furthermore, Dr. Berne also happens to be someone who has CFS/CFIDS/ME and the reader can definitely sense how well she understands and can relate to the effects of these illnesses. This is one of the most frequently recommended books for newly diagnosed patients with CFS/CFIDS/ ME or FM and their family members. Due to its popularity,

it is likely to be found on the public library system but it is definitely worth purchasing and having on hand.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome for Dummies, by Dr. Susan R. Lisman, 2007, ISBN: 0470117729

One of the more recent books on CFS/CFIDS/ME happens to come from the dubiously named "Dummies" series. It follows the general format of the Dummies' books—information is presented within blocks or shaded boxes with special notes or warnings along the sides. The author is Dr. Susan R. Lisman, whose specialty is in anesthesiology at a hospital outside of Boston. However, Dr. Lisman has also worked with a considerable number of CFS/CFIDS/ME patients and writes from her experience about many aspects of the illness (i.e. assessing symptoms, getting diagnosed, and common treatments) with wit, but not in any great depth. In this case, new should not immediately imply better and improved—this book, compared to some of the older publications, is felt to be only mediocre. It may be well-suited for those new to the illness but who are not able to absorb very detailed information. It is available at most leading bookstores, so at least patients can browse through it and decide if this appeals to them.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome—A Treatment Guide, by Erica F. Verrillo and Lauren M. Gellman, 1998, ISBN: 1576260534

Although the first edition of this book was published over 15 years ago, it is one of the most extensive and clearly written guides about CFS/CFIDS/ME— it is very easy to look up information and find almost everything from A to Z. The authors, Ms. Verillo and Gellman, are not medical professionals, but they have meticulously researched and compiled a great deal of data about the illness, which was then carefully subdivided into clear, concise sections. The book spans over 400 pages and offers a good explanation about each featured topic or treatment (conventional and alternative) option. Many of the recommendations are still valid. The full text of the 1998 edition of *Chronic Fatigue Syndrome: A Treatment Guide* is available for readers to review or print (for their personal or educational use) at the CFS Treatment Blog, [CFS Treatment Guide 1st edition](#)