

B vitamins (taken as a BComplex preparation) can be helpful: 50-150mg a day.

Potassium: from parsley, sunflower seeds, almonds and other nuts (in addition to meats and fish and vegetables in the diet and "Lo-Salt"). Bananas and orange juice, contrary to common belief, only contain moderate amounts. Over the counter potassium tablets are not likely to be helpful and may cause stomach irritation.

Evening Primrose Oil: (or borage/star flower oil) especially in combination with fish oils have been found to make people with CFS more energised; flax oil is another helpful source.

Siberian Ginseng: a well known herb

Methionine (SAM): an amino acid: studies have shown methionine deficiency in both MS and in Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. It may also help relieve fibromyalgic symptoms.

Acetyl L-Carnitine: another amino acid, which is reputed to energise the brain and balance the central nervous system. People with CFS, who have weakened immune systems, have lower than expected levels of this amino acid. It is thought that when this is replenished, this helps to alleviate symptoms of fatigue and brain fog.

Lipoic acid: has been used to combat the pain of diabetic neuropathy.

Magnesium: A dose of 300-600mg has been used in Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. It is thought to be particularly effective when combined with 1-2 g malic acid.

Dimethylglycine: (DMG) Dr Atkins (in his book "Vita-Nutrient Solution Nature's Answer to Drugs") says that DMG is a safe and very effective energy booster. Originally (and mistakenly) billed as vitamin B15, it is a methyl donor, which means that it can be involved in a variety of biochemical reactions in the body, including neutralising toxins. DMG is also thought to boost immune function and may even reduce seizure frequency (anecdotal reports).

It is reputed to have antioxidant properties which have been investigated in a study by a nutritional ophthalmologist, who reported that daily 250mg doses of DMG reversed early cataract growth. Dr Atkins recommends 125mg tablets placed under the tongue for rapid absorption.

Work of Dr Goldberg on CFS

Dr Michael Goldberg has worked extensively on Chronic Fatigue Syndrome as well as some forms of immune dysfunction. He describes CFS as a condition in which metabolism is "off-balance", which could just as well describe many people with arachnoiditis.

The following strategies, although aimed at CFS, could be helpful in fatigue related to arachnoiditis.

Exercise

Dr Goldberg notes that "exerted exercise" may result in ill-effects and suggests that

"if the patient feels worse the day following exercise, such activity should be curtailed or stopped if necessary."

This type of strenuous exercise should be particularly avoided during what he terms "down-cycle" periods (which presumably correspond to a 'flare-up' in terms of

arachnoiditis).

Goldberg recommends reinstating moderate non-aerobic exercise once the patient's condition shows some improvement. Slow rebuilding of strength and exercise tolerance is beneficial during an "up-cycle".

Nutritional therapies have not been fully investigated in a conventional clinical trial setting.

Dr Goldberg himself worked in this field in the 1980s: based on that and his personal clinical experience, he recommends a diet high in protein with large portions of chicken, fish, turkey, some red meats and protein-rich vegetables.

His research revealed that many CFS patients appeared to have levels of amino acids (building blocks for proteins) 30-50% below the normal value.

Dr Goldberg is equivocal in his support of vitamin therapy: he contends that

"Multiple vitamins may yield some benefit, but I do not believe megavitamin therapy provides long-term help, and in some cases, may be harmful."

He further suggests that whilst there are anecdotal reports of short-term benefit, there is a lack of evidence of long-term positive results. He considers mega-dose vitamin therapy to be an

"effort to squeeze some energy out of a depleted body; while, in fact, having done nothing to build up that body or to turn off the dysregulatory process."

However, he does believe in taking a high potency multivitamin/iron combination and, depending on lab test results, may recommend extra calcium, magnesium or iron alongside

high dose vitamin C (1-2g).

Dr Goldberg considers Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs) to be potentially beneficial. These include Evening Primrose Oil and fish oil (Omega 6 and Omega 3 oils), which as explained above, may work best in combination. EFAs are important in neuronal transmission, and tend to be depleted in chronic illnesses.

Combating Candida may be a factor. Yeast infections have been implicated in such conditions as CFS.

This article cannot cover this topic in depth, but if you suspect that you have an ongoing yeast or fungal infection, it may be helpful to take steps to tackle the problem.

Candida is particularly common after taking antibiotics because they destroy the commensal gut bacteria and cause an imbalance that allows the yeast to proliferate.

This may manifest as persistent vaginitis in women (which may impact on bladder problems), persistent groin itch or prostatitis in men and may be associated with general malaise, aches and pains and possibly allergies.

One of the simple ways to combat Candida is to take lactobacillus which is now available in dairy products such as yoghurt. Acidopholus/bifidus probiotic preparations are also highly beneficial.

This helps to boost our "friendly" (commensal) gut flora which keep Candida under control. Other simple strategies include cutting out sugar, refined flours, vinegar and other acidic foods, and also mushrooms.

A diet high in vegetables, with possibly the addition of grape-seed extract, flax seed oil, and rotation of natural antifungals such as oregano and cinnamon are possible strategies. Taking one for a sustained period may render it ineffective so rotating between different antifungals can avoid this.

