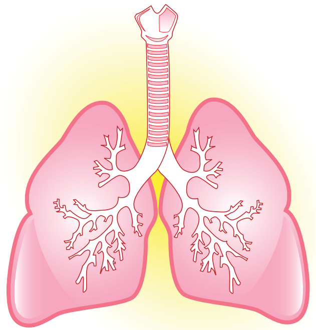
What is cystic fibrosis?

Cystic fibrosis (which sounds like "65 Roses") mainly affects how a person's lungs and digestive system works. Lots of people call cystic fibrosis "CF" for short.

Everyone has mucus (boogers) in their body but when a person has CF, it means that the mucus in their body is thick and sticky and clogs areas like the lungs and a part of stomach called the pancreas which causes all sorts of problems.

How do you treat CF?



To get rid of the mucus in their body, people with CF have to do exercises called physiotherapy. People with CF also take medicine called antibiotics which helps to clear their lungs and fights nasty bugs that might be in their lungs.

Many people with CF also have to take special medicine called enzyme capsules every time they eat food which has fat or protein in it. The capsules help the body to digest food properly. Salt tablets or a special salt liquid are also things that some people with CF have to include in their daily treatment.

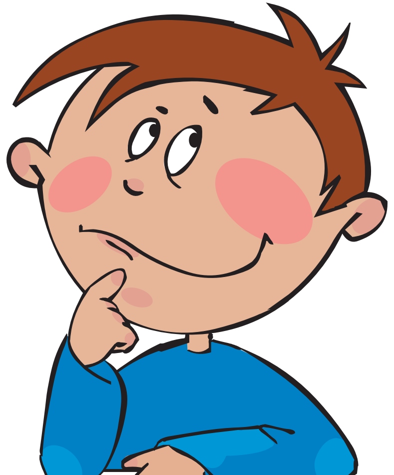
People with CF are encouraged to exercise as much as they can, as this is a great way to help clear mucus from the body.

Hospital checkups

Many people with CF have to go to hospital for check ups and may have to stay in there for a few days or weeks. Doctors check their lungs, diet and medication.

How do you get CF?

You can't catch CF, you are born with it. All babies born in Australia are tested for CF.



The CF diet

To help with energy and growth, many people with CF need to eat more foods with fat and salt in them. This means that foods like chips or chocolate are considered healthy for people with CF.

Is there a cure for CF?

At the moment there isn't a cure for CF, it stays in the body all the time. But there are lots of doctors and scientists all over the world working to find better treatments and also a cure.

A person with CF may:

- cough a lot
- have difficulty breathing
- get tired easily
- visit the toilet often
- not always be hungry
- be smaller than average
- look “normal” and “healthy” even though he/she could be unwell

For more information please contact:
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Email: educationofficer@cysticfibrosiswa.org

How can I help my classmate or friend with CF?

Things like colds and tummy upsets are not nice to have but if a person with CF gets a cold or something like chicken pox, it can be very serious.

Some people with CF can end up in hospital after catching a simple cold.

If you are in a class with someone who has CF and you have a yucky cold, please try not to pass it on. The best way to avoid spreading germs is to make sure you wash your hands after going to the toilet. Try coughing or sneezing into your jumper. Always wash your hands after you sneeze, cough or blow your nose.

How many people have CF in Australia?

There are about 3 000 people in Australia and about 300 people in Western Australia who have CF.

In some families there is more than one child with CF.

What is Cystic Fibrosis?

Cystic Fibrosis WA