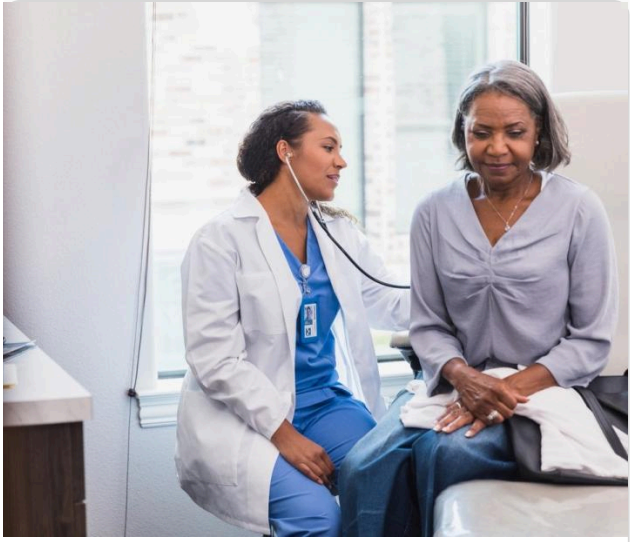
CYSTIC FIBROSIS

What Is Cystic Fibrosis?

Cystic fibrosis is a genetic condition that changes a protein in the body. The faulty protein affects the body's cells, tissues, and the glands that make mucus and sweat. The medical abbreviation of cystic fibrosis is CF.

Normal mucus is slippery and protects the airways, digestive tract, and other organs and tissues. Cystic fibrosis causes mucus to become thick and sticky. As mucus builds up, it can cause blockages, damage, or infections in affected organs.

Cystic fibrosis used to cause death in childhood. Survival has improved because of advances in newborn screening, medicines, nutrition, and lung transplants. Nearly 40,000 children and adults in the United States — and more than 100,000 worldwide — are now living with cystic fibrosis. Children born between 2019 and 2023 who have cystic fibrosis are expected to live an average of 61 years. On average, half of babies born in 2023 with cystic fibrosis are expected to reach the age of 68 or older.



FACT SHEET

What is Cystic Fibrosis?

Learn about cystic fibrosis, its signs, symptoms, and ways to manage the disease after a diagnosis.

View the cystic fibrosis fact sheet

Some people who have cystic fibrosis have few or no symptoms, while others experience severe symptoms or life-threatening complications. The most serious and common complications of cystic fibrosis are problems with the lungs, typically caused by serious lung infections. Sometimes lung problems will suddenly worsen; this is called a flare-up or exacerbation . Your healthcare provider will recommend treatments to improve lung function and prevent or manage complications. Treatment can improve your quality of life and help you live longer.

Last updated on November 15, 2024

Back to top

Web Policies & Notices

- Accessibility ›
- No FEAR Act Data ›
- Privacy Policy ›
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) ›
- HHS Vulnerability Disclosure

Related Government Websites

- Health and Human Services
- National Institutes of Health ›
- Office of the Inspector General
- USA.gov

Stay Connected

Live Chat

Live Chat with us, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST.

Get Email Alerts ›

Receive automatic alerts about NHLBI related news and highlights from across the Institute.