



# Creating an ME/CFS accessible healthcare practice

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*People with ME/CFS have a limited amount of energy to do the things they need to get done in a day. Helping them conserve their energy will reduce the impact of essential medical appointments.*

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This tip sheet encourages you to assess the accessibility of your practice for people with ME/CFS and other energy limiting conditions.

## To aid energy conservation, provide:

- **Easy accessibility to the building** for mobility aids, and close parking to limit walking
- **Places to sit and lie down while waiting** - a chair at reception, couches, options for quiet areas close to consulting rooms, a spare room or a bed in the nurses' station. Some patients find waiting in the car and coming in when called allows them to recline - problems with prolonged sitting or standing (orthostatic intolerance) are common
- **Reduce sensory stimulation by reducing lighting and noise** - people with ME/CFS often experience increased sensitivity to light and sound and/or chemicals. Patients wearing sunglasses, masks or noise canceling devices should not be seen as displaying health anxiety
- **Remove/minimise perfumes/scented cleaning products** - multiple-chemical sensitivity is common for people with ME/CFS
- **Maintain an even, ambient temperature** - problems with adapting to hot or cold environments are common for people with ME/CFS

## Before and during appointments:

- **Encourage the patient to bring a support person to their appointment if they wish**
- **If the patient is having word finding difficulties or has forgotten essential documents**, reassure them everything is OK and you understand ME/CFS can impact their cognitive function
- **Be open to having appointments recorded**, cognitive issues can affect information processing and recall
- **Provide a written summary of issues discussed during an appointment** and any further actions for the patient

### **Flexible delivery of care:**

25% of people with ME/CFS are house or bed-bound. Fluctuating levels of impairment are also common and during a relapse. For these reasons, patients often require access to telehealth and/or home visits.

### **Patient services**

Some specialist knowledge about ME/CFS will help you provide the best care to your patients:

- Doctors are familiar with administration and patient application forms for accessing financial and physical assistance.

**You can contact our education unit to discuss continuing professional development:  
[education@emerge.org.au](mailto:education@emerge.org.au)**



**[www.emerge.org.au](http://www.emerge.org.au)  
1800 865 321**

### **Patient Support and Information Service**

Speak with our friendly team during business hours, Monday to Friday. Our team can provide you with information on ME/CFS and Long COVID and support you in navigating general health and community services. We can also answer common queries related to the programs and services provided by Emerge Australia.

**Visit [emerge.org.au](http://emerge.org.au) or call 1800 865 321**