



Cystic Fibrosis Case History - Beth

In this activity you will learn about the symptoms of cystic fibrosis by reading the case history of a cystic fibrosis patient. Read the case history carefully. Make a list of symptoms and when they appeared. Note how and when a diagnosis was made, and what treatments are being used. Also note the effects this disease has had on the patient's life, as well as things the patient is still able to do. You will then present your case to the class.

There are four different cases histories. By comparing the four different cases presented by your classmates you should get a good idea of the common symptoms and problems of cystic fibrosis as well as the variability of this disease.

Case History - Beth

Beth was 20 years old when she was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis. She has an older brother and a younger brother, they are both healthy, and there is no history of CF in the family. Beth was extremely shocked since she thought this was a disease diagnosed early in life.

Throughout her life she had no trouble eating and gained weight normally. She had none of the usual weight gain issues, stomach pains, or vomiting.

Despite her lack of GI symptoms, Beth did get many colds each year. She often developed pneumonia after these colds. In fact once she was hospitalized for severe pneumonia. Additionally she always had a cough and was often short of breath.

When she was 20 she again was hospitalized for severe pneumonia. When her doctor listened to her long history of respiratory infections, including a previous hospitalization, she became suspicious and ordered genetic testing. This genetic testing showed that Beth carried two defective CFTR genes (the gene which is mutated in CF).

Since Beth showed no evidence of the pancreatic insufficiency commonly seen in CF, she does not take pancreatic enzyme supplements with meals. However, she now undergoes chest physical therapy twice a day to help dislodge the thick mucus which accumulates in her lungs.

Beth is a college student majoring in engineering. She considers herself both lucky and unlucky. Unlucky to have CF, but lucky to have such a mild case of the disease.