Cystic Fibrosis  
Case History - Steve

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 - Steve

Steve is 10 yrs old. He was born with a ruptured bowel - a common symptom of cystic fibrosis. The doctor immediately tested his sweat and found he had elevated chloride levels indicative of CF. Following surgery to close his bowel, Steve recovered nicely, and has taken pancreatic digestive enzymes as a supplement since birth. He must take these enzymes since his pancreas is clogged by thick mucus preventing it from delivering digestive enzymes to his intestines.

Since his surgery at birth, Steve has been in the hospital twice, once for a viral lung infection, and once to try and clear bacteria from his lungs using powerful intravenous antibiotics.

Steve must undergo chest physical therapy twice a day for an hour which involves pounding on the chest while he is in a semi-inverted position to remove the thick mucus which accumulates in his lungs. He has also had trouble gaining weight, despite the digestive enzymes he takes. This problem was especially bad when he was three years old and went through a period when he was extremely picky about what he would eat.

Occasionally he receives intravenous antibiotics at home rather than in the hospital. This is good since it allows him to remain at home with his family. However, it can be hard on both Steve and his family. His mother must keep him wake him up at midnight, and then again at 6 in the morning to give him the necessary injections.

Steve does quite well in school despite his illness. While at home sick or in the hospital Steve continues school with the help of different home/hospital schooling options. In addition to doing well in school, Steve really enjoys soccer. He was extremely disappointed when last year he was unable to finish the season with his team due to pneumonia. This season he is doing very well.