Cystic Fibrosis
Case History - Jeff

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 - Jeff

Jeff was born in 1979. As an infant, he was completely normal, however as a toddler Jeff had trouble gaining weight and complained of stomach pains. At age 6, he weighed only 30 pounds. His parents were blamed for not feeding him properly. Jeff also had two serious bouts of pneumonia before the age of six.

When Jeff was seven, his 18 month-old sister almost died of dehydration. During this incident, she was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis. The doctors then asked about other family members, and it became clear that this was the likely cause of Jeff's problems. A sweat test confirmed that Jeff also had CF.

Jeff began the typical chest physical therapy and pancreatic enzyme supplements at age 7. Despite this late start to his treatments, Jeff only had 3 serious cases of pneumonia requiring hospitalization while he was in high school.

Jeff is currently 20 years old. He is studying microbiology and doing research in a lab. He is looking for the cystic fibrosis mutation in his own DNA.

When he is healthy, his medications cost $10,000 a year. He takes $20 worth of pills every day. Each time he eats he must take pancreatic enzymes. He also often continues to receive chest physical therapy and take antibiotics for repeated lung infections.