

Cystic Fibrosis in the Workplace



What is Cystic Fibrosis (CF)?

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is one of the most common genetic diseases affecting people in Australia. People with CF experience lung and digestive issues including:

- Recurrent lung infections
- Difficulty gaining weight and absorbing nutrients
- Increased susceptibility to infection

Management of CF

Most CF management occurs in the home; however, regular hospital appointments and admissions are required to maintain optimal health. There are many treatments each day that may take several hours to complete. Some ways people with CF manage their health include:

- **Daily physiotherapy:** This is required to keep the lungs clear and prevent permanent lung damage.
- **Nutrition:** People with CF require up to 40 enzyme capsules per day to assist with the digestion of food.
- **Medications:** Common medications include enzymes, antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, salt, vitamins and more. Medications may be taken orally, inhaled via a nebuliser or other inhaler device or given intravenously.
- **Exercise:** Daily exercise is essential for lung health.

Hospital Admissions

People with CF may be admitted to hospital for 2-3 weeks at a time, several times a year. For young children, a parent will need to stay in hospital with the child causing disruption to family life. This may mean parents of children with CF require time off work at short notice.

How Can We Support Parents of Children with CF in the Workplace?

- Have open, honest communication and understand needs can change over time
- Good hand hygiene and cough etiquette policies to prevent the spread of infection
- Encourage staff to stay home if unwell or practice social distancing
- Flexible work arrangements to assist with hospital appointments and admissions
- Create an environment of understanding for parents with chronically ill children

Cystic Fibrosis WA are available to provide workplace education on CF. For more information get in touch with our team at education@cfwa.org.au or on **08 6457 7333**.