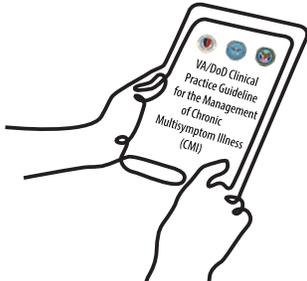


### What is the VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Chronic Multisymptom Illness (CMI)?



Clinical practice guidelines (CPG) are important tools to ensure you receive the best healthcare possible for your Chronic Multisymptom Illness. An expert panel reviewed the current scientific evidence and summarized key recommendations in the CPG.

If you are diagnosed with CMI, your medical provider and other members of the healthcare team may use the guidance in the VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Management of Chronic Multisymptom Illness (CMI) to develop a personal treatment plan that's right for you.

### What should I do if I think I have CMI?



Talk to your healthcare team about any and all symptoms that you may be experiencing. Your providers will determine whether your symptoms require urgent treatment and treat those accordingly.

They may then do a thorough evaluation to understand your symptoms and assess for other conditions. If indicated, blood tests and imaging scans may be ordered.

It is important to work with your healthcare team to develop a personalized treatment plan to manage symptoms, improve your ability to do daily activity and work toward your healthcare goals.

### What are some of the safe and effective treatment options available to me?



There are many treatment options available depending on the symptoms you experience. These may include behavioral health treatments and complementary and integrative health therapies, medicines, exercise, yoga or tai chi.

Your healthcare team will work with you to develop a treatment plan that is built specifically for your symptoms to help you meet your goals and improve your daily life.

### Is CMI a psychiatric condition?



No, CMI is not a psychiatric condition. It is the result of changes in our bodies in the same way that any disease is related to changes in the ways our bodies function. CMI is treated like any other medical condition, using best practice approaches that are based on scientific evidence. Your healthcare team will partner with you to determine a personalized, pro-active approach to your care.

It is important to remember that mental health conditions are common and may occur with CMI. All mental health conditions should be identified and treated appropriately to lead to the best health and quality of life for you.

### What will Behavioral Health interventions do for me?



Behavioral therapy is used by counselors to help you develop habits and behaviors that are healthier for you. They may use cognitive behavioral, mindfulness-based or emotion-focused therapy to help with managing your symptoms.

## What are Complementary and Integrative Health (CIH) interventions? And how will they help me?



Complementary health interventions can be used in place of or used along with standard medical care. Integrative medicine refers to care that blends both mainstream and alternative practices. CIH helps you by treating the whole person rather than just one system or problem. This could include traditional medicine combined with lifestyle changes, Physical/Occupational therapy and behavioral health.

Since CMI can be complex and involve multiple body systems, the whole person approach of CIH and Behavioral health can be key to successfully managing symptoms and improving quality of life.

## Why are so many medications (pharmacological/psychotropic) recommended?



CMI can include several different categories of illness with various symptoms. Medications are used to treat or manage these symptoms. Some medications can treat more than one symptom or set of symptoms. Your provider will determine what medications, if any, are needed to treat your specific symptoms.

## Should I take opioids for my chronic pain?



No. Opioids are not recommended for the management of chronic pain that is often reported by patients with CMI. Ask your doctor about non-opioid medications as well as other pain management options such as acupuncture and mindfulness-based therapy.

Working closely with your healthcare team is the best way to find a non-opioid pain management strategy that works for you.

## Is there anything I can take to boost my energy?



There are a variety of medical conditions that may be the cause of poor energy levels. If the cause of poor energy levels is known, it is important to treat the underlying condition.

If the cause is not known, cognitive or motivational therapies may be effective in boosting energy levels. If a medication needs to be considered, your healthcare team will work with you to determine the best options, however, stimulants are not recommended.

Self-care strategies for good sleep, appropriate diet, and exercise are important lifestyle changes that may positively affect energy levels.

## Is CMI the same as Gulf War Illnesses (GWI)?

CMI is a broad definition and GWI may be one of several illnesses included in the broad definition of CMI. After every modern military combat deployment, some Service Members have reported illnesses characterized by multiple chronic symptoms upon their return. While Service Members who were part of the Gulf War more frequently report more of these chronic and disabling symptoms, the diagnosis of CMI is not unique to those who served in any specific combat era. There is not enough published evidence about effective treatments for GWI to support a separate Clinical Practice Guideline.

## MORE INFORMATION

For additional information on the VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Chronic Multisymptom Illness, Provider Summary, and Patient Summary at <https://www.healthquality.va.gov/guidelines/MR/cmi/>



Patient Summary



Provider Summary