

Invisible Disabilities: Limitations and Reasonable Accommodations

An invisible disability is a physical, mental, or neurological condition that is not observable by others but may impact a person's movements, senses, activities, and/or bodily functions. Many invisible disabilities have a wide range of symptoms and can pose varying limitations depending on how symptoms manifest in an individual. Often, because symptoms are not visible to others, this can lead to misunderstandings and/or inaccurate perceptions or judgments about the individual. People with invisible disabilities may feel conflicted about disclosing their limitations and uncertain of their employer's ability or willingness to provide effective accommodations. As with other types of disabilities, employees with invisible disabilities may require only one reasonable accommodation, while others may need more than one accommodation to perform the essential functions of their position. For more information on reasonable accommodations, visit the [Job Accommodation Network](#). The following table presents common symptoms, limitations, and accommodations associated with invisible disabilities:

Condition/ Disability	Symptoms/Limitations	Accommodations
Type 1 Diabetes Lupus Multiple Sclerosis Rheumatoid Arthritis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• fatigue• pain• limited ability to perform physical work• inability to stand for long periods of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- relocate workspace near printer/copier/restroom- schedule challenging tasks when stamina is optimal- longer/extra breaks- flexible work schedule- telework- ergonomic evaluation/equipment- heater/fan/temperate work environment- access to refrigerator- reduce/eliminate physical exertion- modified lighting
Fibromyalgia Myalgic Encephalomyelitis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• weakness• physical fatigue/pain• mental fatigue ("brain fog")	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- relocate workspace closer to restroom/office supplies/parking lot- heater/fan/temperate work environment

<p>Chronic Fatigue Syndrome</p> <p>Long COVID</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty caring for self • lightheaded/dizzy when standing • difficulty sitting and/or standing for long periods of time • difficulty lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, and grasping • temperature and light sensitivity (see also: migraines) • irritable bowel syndrome • headache • sleep disorders • anxiety and/or depression* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - frequent breaks/modified break schedule - split shift/flexible work schedule - telework - adjustable work desk - ergonomic evaluation/equipment - speech recognition software - wireless headset - forearm supports - rolling cart for transporting items - heater/fan/temperate work environment - noise canceling headphones - sound machine - memory aids (flowcharts/checklists/written instructions/cheat sheets) - modified lighting - private office - quiet/distraction free workspace - aid/assistant
<p>Short bowel syndrome</p> <p>Chronic liver disease</p> <p>Gastrointestinal hemorrhaging</p> <p>Inflammatory bowel disease</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stress and/or difficulty concentrating due to abdominal pain • sleep deprivation • absenteeism • tardiness • anxiety and/or depression* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relocate workspace closer to restroom - frequent breaks - modified workstation to support better positioning, alleviate pain - telework - part-time hours/modified/flexible work schedule

Migraines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • headache • nausea • dizziness • eyestrain • light and noise sensitivity • stress intolerance • concentration • memory • fatigue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - alternative lighting - noise cancelling headphones - sound machines - digital screen filters - fragrance free policy - quiet rest/work area - frequent breaks - flexible work schedule - telework
Fragrance sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • headache • nausea • respiratory problems • severe skin irritation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - air purifier - mask/respirator - discontinue use of scented cleaning products - fresh air breaks - scent masking (using a pleasing or benign odor to mask triggering odors) - educate employees and discourage using fragrances at work - modify work schedule/ relocate workspace to minimize exposure to triggering scents - telework
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty learning/reasoning • memory loss • decision making • adjusting to change • organizing thoughts or tasks • time management • difficulty with focus and attention • fatigue/stamina • tingling/pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - written instructions/ expectations/calendars/ checklists - recording device - reminders/timers/alarms - distraction free workspace - white noise machine - quiet music - natural lighting - extra training - job coach - note taker

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coordination and balance • blurred or double vision • photosensitivity • Tinnitus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - schedule challenging tasks when focus is optimal - flexible/reduced hours
Learning Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organization • concentration • time management/meeting deadlines • managing distractions • auditory/visual processing • challenges with reading, writing, and/or mathematics • difficulty reasoning, listening, and/or speaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - task reminders/timers/alarms - written instructions, - checklist/planners/flowcharts/color-coding systems - Kurzweil 3000 software - Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software - noise cancelling headphones - sound machine - extra training - support person/mentor - quiet workspace - modified break schedule - flexible schedule - telework

*Please see “Psychiatric Disabilities: Limitations and Accommodations” for additional information related to this limitation