

# Fatigue from Cancer Therapy

Fatigue is a sense of tiredness that doesn't seem to go away, even with rest or sleep. It is not unusual to feel tired while you are receiving cancer therapy. Remember that fatigue is a temporary side effect of treatment, and it is different from ordinary tiredness. Also, the fatigue you may experience depends on many factors and varies from person to person. You may feel fatigued during cancer treatments, right after treatments, or even for months after treatment.

Please ask your nurse to review this information with you and to answer any questions you may have. Keep your nurse and doctor informed about your energy level or feelings of fatigue.

## Helpful Hints for Managing Fatigue

- Pace your activities for the day. Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.
- Set realistic goals. Increase or decrease activities as needed.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help with chores.
- Look for ways to save your energy. Try shorter or easier versions of activities. For example, sit while you fold the laundry and limit trips up and down the stairs.
- Allow time for naps or rest periods. Avoid long naps or naps in the late afternoon. And limit your total time in bed.
- Save time for activities you enjoy. Plan them as part of your day. This helps to decrease stress. Stress can drain your energy.
- Plan a short period of light activity each day, such as a walk or a stroll. Being inactive may actually increase fatigue.
- Eat a diet with foods that will give you a balance of calories, protein, carbohydrate, fat, vitamins, and minerals. Drink at least eight glasses of fluids daily, unless your doctor has restricted the amount of fluids you can drink due to another medical condition. Avoid foods and beverages that contain caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol, which contribute to fatigue.
- Use labor-saving devices. This may mean having a bedside commode or using a raised toilet seat. Or this may mean using grabbing tools or a walker.
- Other suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

## Things to Report to Your Nurse or Doctor

Tell your nurse or doctor if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Headaches
- Ringing in your ears
- A sudden increase in fatigue
- Any new or unusual symptoms

## Things to Report Immediately

Call **immediately** if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Fainting

In an Emergency Call:

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