

How to Deal with Fatigue

Fatigue

Fatigue is a feeling of tiredness that can keep you from doing the things you normally do or want to do. Fatigue is one of the most common problems cancer patients have to deal with. It is a warning sign that the body needs more rest, so listen to your body.

Signs of Fatigue

- feeling weary or exhausted. It may be physical, emotional and/or mental exhaustion.
- decreased desire to do normal daily activities
- finding it hard to think clearly and to concentrate
- feeling very “heavy,” especially arms and legs.

When to Call Your Nurse

You should call your nurse if you:

- are too tired to get out of bed for the past 24 hours
- feel confused or cannot think clearly
- think your fatigue has become worse
- have severe shortness of breath
- feel dizzy when you change positions.

How to Manage Your Fatigue

- Plan your day so that you have time to rest.
- Take several short naps instead of one, long rest period.
- Pace your activities around your energy level.
- Eat a well-balanced diet if possible and drink plenty of liquids.
- Increase the protein and calories in your diet (such as cheese, yogurt, milk shakes, fish, meat, poultry and supplements).
- Take short walks or do light exercise once a day if you can.
- Try easier or shorter versions of activities you enjoy.
- Try less strenuous activities, like reading or visiting with friends and family.
- Save your energy for those activities that are most important to you.
- Try to become comfortable asking friends and family for help.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- If you can, reduce your hours at work or stop working temporarily.
- Do activities that you enjoy or make you feel good.

Cancer fatigue is real. Please do not ignore it. Talk with your nurse about what you can do to help maintain your quality of life.