

FATIGUE

WHAT IS FATIGUE?

Fatigue is a tired feeling that is not relieved with sleep and lasts over time. People often experience a lack of energy and motivation accompanied by feelings of weariness and tiredness.

HOW IS CANCER FATIGUE DIFFERENT?

The difference between fatigue caused by cancer and general fatigue is that cancer-related fatigue is usually not improved with rest and recovery and lasts longer. In cancer, fatigue can be the result of treatment or from the cancer.

CAUSES OF FATIGUE

- Cancer and its effect on the body
- Cancer treatments, including chemotherapy, radiation, targeted therapies, immunotherapies
- Pain
- Medications, such as those used to treat pain and nausea
- Shortness of breath
- Lack of exercise and activity
- Poor nutrition and hydration
- Emotions such as depression and anxiety
- Other medical conditions such as COPD
- Hormonal changes

DETERMINE YOUR CAUSE

- Take a full family and social history
- Understand your medical history and medications
- Get a physical examination and/or lab tests
- Consider sleep studies
- Keep a daily activity log

TALK WITH YOUR TREATMENT TEAM ABOUT YOUR FATIGUE SO THEY CAN IDENTIFY THE CAUSES AND HELP YOU BEST MANAGE IT.

TAKE CONTROL

SLEEP

Be proactive about getting a good night's sleep by incorporating some or all of the following:

- Follow a nighttime routine
- Reduce stress
- Write in a journal
- Avoid screen time 2 hours before sleep
- Limit naps during the day
- Use the bedroom for sleep only
- Adopt meditation techniques
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco and caffeine

ACTIVITY

Be as active as possible, every day. Consider some of the following ways to stay active and take care of your body:

- Short walks
- Yoga
- Physical therapy
- Therapeutic massage
- Acupuncture

EMOTIONS

If you are facing cancer, it is likely you are experiencing some form of anxiety, depression or emotional distress, all of which can result in fatigue. Be aware of these feelings and consider talking with a therapist to address them.

MEDICATION

Know what medications you are on and the side effects they carry with them. Most medications for depression, anxiety and insomnia are sedatives/depressants and can affect sleep patterns. If you have tried all these techniques and still don't see a difference, your doctor may have additional recommendations.

TIPS TO TRY

- Monitor your fatigue levels. Try keeping a diary to share with your treatment team.
- Create and stick with a routine.
- Practice energy conservation. Say no to the things you really don't have to do and accept help with daily tasks.
- Eat a healthy diet and stay hydrated.
- Assess and manage your pain.
- Keep an open dialogue with your treatment team regarding your fatigue, as well as other symptoms and side effects you are experiencing.

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