

What is cancer-related fatigue?

Cancer-related fatigue is a feeling of tiredness that can last a long time and does not go away with rest or sleep. It is different than the fatigue you felt before you had cancer. Fatigue is usually worse during treatment. Your fatigue can range from mild to severe.

Fatigue can make you feel:

- Very tired, weak, heavy or slow
- Like you can't think or remember things
- Like you don't have the energy to see people or do activities

Fatigue is the most common symptom felt by people with cancer. It is a normal part of your cancer treatment.

What can I do to manage my fatigue?

1. Be active

Exercise is a great way to improve your energy and make your fatigue better. Aim to get 30 minutes of moderate exercise on most days. The exercise should not be too hard. You should be able to talk easily while you are exercising.

Examples of exercises:

- Walking
- Swimming
- Yoga
- Cycling
- Lifting weights

Be safe when exercising:

- Stop and rest if you feel sore, stiff or out of breath
- Always talk to your health care team about how to exercise safely
- You can exercise at any time during or after treatment

2. Pace yourself

Use your energy wisely in order to do the things that are most important to you.

Follow the 4 Ps:

- Plan Ahead → plan your day with time to rest before and after activities
- Prioritize → decide which activities are most important & save your energy for those
- Pace → do one activity at a time, without rushing
- Position → sit when you do things, if possible

3. Improve your sleep

Getting a good sleep can give you more energy.

These tips can help you improve your sleep:

- Morning → Wake up at the same time each day, even on weekends
- Daytime → Take short naps (less than 1 hour) between 12 and 3pm in a room other than your bedroom
- Evening → Before going to bed, lower the lights and do activities like reading, listening to music or taking a warm bath. Try activities like prayer, mediation, and imagery. Turn off all screens like computers, TV's and iPads at least one hour before going to bed
- Bedtime → Use your bed for sleep and intimacy/sex only. If you can't fall asleep after 20 to 30 minutes, get out of bed until you feel sleepy and then go back to bed

4. Manage stress & emotions

Talking to someone about your feelings and doing activities to help with stress and anxiety can help your fatigue.

These tips can help you manage your stress and emotions:

- Change or stay away from situations that cause you stress
- Distract yourself by playing games or talking with friends
- Focus on positive things and things you can control

Try these relaxing activities to help you reduce your stress:

- Yoga, meditation or clearing your mind
- Hypnosis, massage, music therapy

Talk to your doctor before taking any herbal therapies. Some herbal remedies may interfere with cancer treatments.

5. Be patient

Feeling better will take time. Small changes can improve your fatigue over time.

These tips can help you make changes:

- Listen to your body
- Start slowly and make changes one at a time
- Set easy, realistic goals
- Recognize and celebrate what you achieve along the way

The information presented was gathered from CCO.