



CANCER
INFAMILY
— build knowledge



FATIGUE

This leaflet is about fatigue caused by chemotherapy or radiotherapy. Ask your doctor if you are at risk of developing the condition.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS LEAFLET DO NOT REPLACE THOSE OF THE DOCTOR/ONCOLOGIST WHO CLOSELY FOLLOWS YOUR CASE.

Fatigue

Cancer patients receiving treatment for the disease often suffer from fatigue.



This fatigue is different from the tiredness felt at the end of a working day: patients have no energy, cannot concentrate, and resting does not help. In the worst cases, a state of persistent physical, emotional and mental exhaustion can develop.

However, this varies greatly between individuals. That is why it is so important that when reporting to your doctor you should be honest and detailed, e.g. saying things like "I was unable to go to work for 3 days" instead of "I felt very tired".

Fatigue can be caused by the disease itself, the treatment(s) used or related problems, such as the stress, anxiety and even depression experienced by patients.





How to cope with fatigue:

- × Take time during the day to rest – take short naps or breaks (around 30 minutes) rather than long ones.
- × Stay active and exercise as much as you can. Regular walking can help with fatigue, as well as sleep problems, another common problem in cancer. Talk with your doctor/nurse about an exercise plan to suit you.
- × Learn to notice when your body needs a rest. This will help you better plan your day.
- × Follow a balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids.
- × Ask for help with everyday small tasks - things as looking after children or old people under your care, shopping, cleaning or driving. For example, you can ask your friends/neighbors to pick up your groceries when they go shopping.
- × Limit your activities. Only do the things that are most important to Maintain your social life. Do not disappear, being with friends and family is important; just make sure that you do it at your own pace.
- × Be sure to sleep well - close to bedtime avoid drinking coffee, alcohol, or black/green tea (which have theine, an excitant similar to caffeine). Try listening to relaxing music, or reading before bed.
- × If you are having trouble sleeping at night, be sure to tell your doctor. He(s)he can prescribe medication to help with the cause(s), for example to control pain, nausea and vomiting, or recommend relaxation techniques to reduce anxiety.
- × You can also try yoga, oriental techniques or massage to relax.



PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLETS ARE NOT MEANT TO REPLACE THE INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT PROVIDED BY YOUR DOCTOR

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