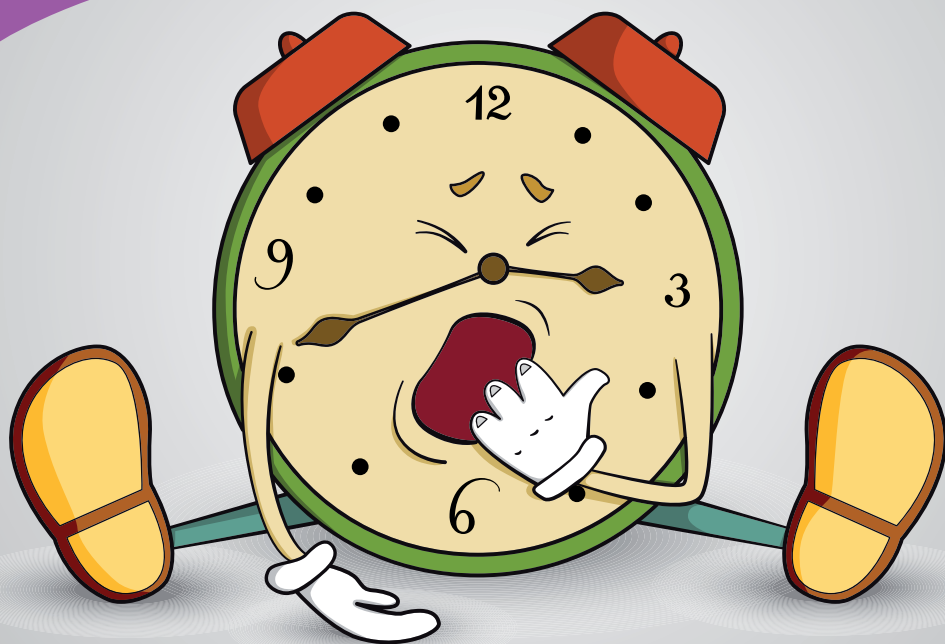


What is Fatigue?



Tired? Shattered? Lethargic? Washed out?

0113 218 5500

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What is fatigue?

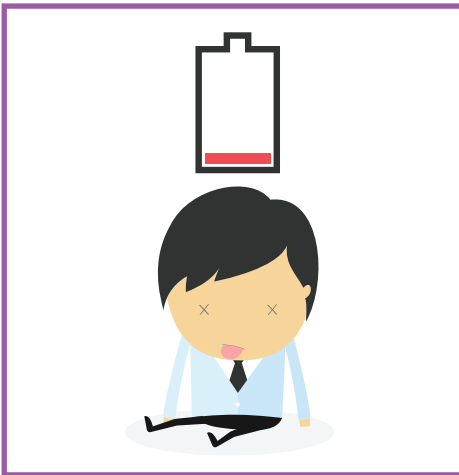
This is what people have said:

“An hour after getting up I feel as if I as if I’m wading through mud in wellington boots”

“It makes me feel useless, like even if I have an idea to do something my body can’t do it”

Fatigue is a common problem for people experiencing illness. It affects people differently and can be a difficult idea to grasp, especially for those close to you as it can’t be seen.

How long will it last?



This varies as fatigue can affect each individual differently. It is important that you tell the health care team looking after you if you are feeling more tired, fatigued or lethargic.

There are some physical causes that are readily treatable, e.g. anaemia. Some other causes are unavoidable, so it is important to try to learn how to manage it.

What causes fatigue?

The following factors may contribute to fatigue:



How to attempt to help yourself

Fatigue and early onset of exhaustion can limit your daily function and activity. Management of your energy levels and capabilities is one of the key components to maximising your physical goals.

Use the support that is available to enable you to perform daily activities. Through learning and adaption of your contribution towards these activities you can maintain independence whilst managing the energy levels you have.

Prioritisation

By organising your daily activity needs around the order of importance you can prioritise those tasks and modify your day accordingly. This will ensure that you can plan your energy management around these aims.

Advice on planning

Have a daily schedule based on what you want to do / what needs to be done – incorporating periods of rest and recovery.

Minimise the difficulty of tasks where possible with the introduction of equipment, assistance, support, advice etc.

Recognise those tasks that require most energy and structure them into your day appropriately.



Advice on pacing

Factor in rest periods throughout the day and over time modify these specifically around known periods of tiredness.

Relaxation techniques and periods of relaxation throughout the day can minimise exhaustion.

Activities of daily life style can be functional, fun and / or necessary but as a rule perform them for a shorter duration but greater frequency.

Further advice on managing activities of daily living is available through your occupational therapist.

Exercise

Exercise has clinically proven benefits in energy management and remaining active. However, exercising with fatigue has differences to regular exercise and it must be appropriate and specific for the individual.

Keeping the exercises based on function is vital as it contributes towards the very tasks you wish to perform.

Examples of this are regular short walks both indoors and outdoors and / or up and down stairs.

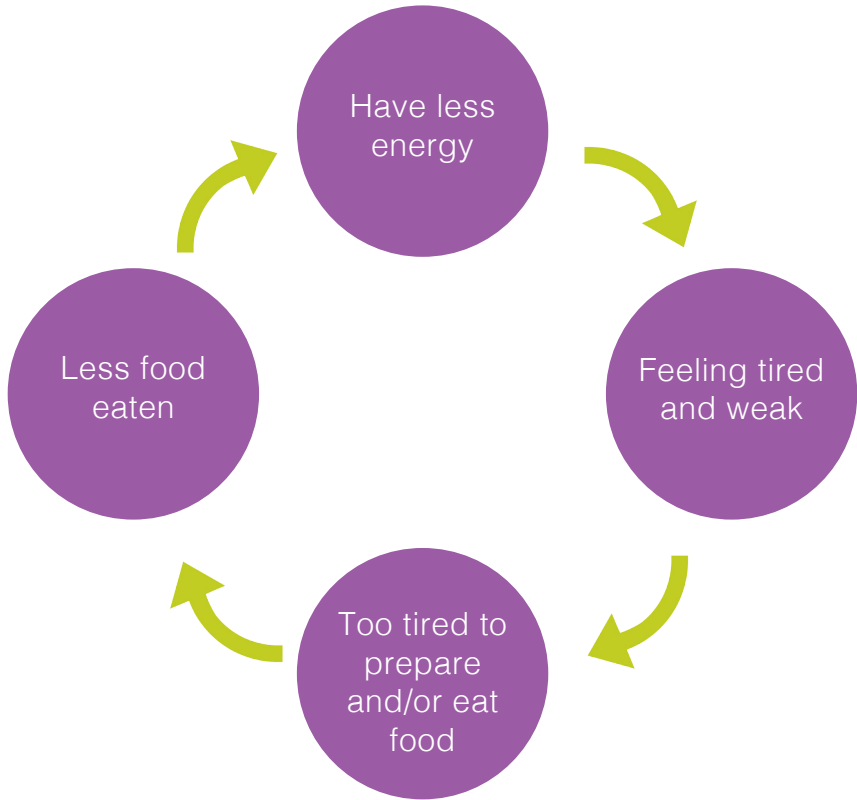
Reflect on your activity levels and look for patterns of fatigue that could have been avoided.

Progress

Further advice about exercise is available through your physiotherapist.







Eating and drinking

When you are feeling tired and fatigued you may not feel like eating as much as usual. Alternatively, feeling nauseous can lead to eating less and this may in turn affect your energy levels resulting in a vicious cycle.



The following suggestions may help

- ♥ Try to eat at times when you feel less tired.
- ♥ Cold foods can be as good for you as hot meals and may be quicker to prepare.
- ♥ Softer foods take less effort to eat e.g. scrambled egg, shepherd's pie, lasagne.

-  Microwaving food can save time so may be less tiring than other ways of cooking.
-  Ready meals take less effort to prepare so may be useful to have at home.
-  Six small meals or snacks may be easier to face than three large meals during the day.
-  Buying foods with a long shelf life may save the need to shop so often.
-  If you feel that caffeine / alcohol affect the quality of your sleep, you may want to try avoiding caffeinated / alcoholic drinks in the evening.
-  Further advice is available if you have difficulty swallowing or have lost weight. Please ask your health care team if you would like more advice or if you would like to see the dietician.

Complementary Therapies

There are a number of different complementary therapies that may help you cope with fatigue. They include:

-  Reflexology
-  Aromatherapy
-  Massage
-  Hypnotherapy
-  Reiki
-  Relaxation

If you would like any further information in these therapies please ask to speak to a member of the complementary therapy team.

Help and Advice

If you require further help go back to the person who gave you this booklet as they may be able to give you further advice, or ask one of your health care team for help.

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