

# Fatigue

## Just the Facts

Being tired is a very common experience for patients. Fatigue is a daily lack of energy, an unusual or excessive whole body tiredness not relieved by sleep. There are a number of possible causes for fatigue: the intensive treatments, medications, a lower than normal number of circulating red blood cells, stress, decreased nutrition, nausea, vomiting, mouth sores, taste changes, heart burn, or diarrhea, disruption of normal resting and sleep habits, or feelings of depression. It usually takes time to work out ways to live with fatigue.

## Your Goals:

- ✓ Establish regular rest and sleep periods.
- ✓ Conserve energy.
- ✓ Get professional help when needed.



## Emergency Signs and Symptoms:

Call 911 IMMEDIATELY if:

- If you are the caregiver and can not wake your patient.

## Urgent Signs and Symptoms:

Call the Clinic or the After Hours Clinic NOW if:

- Dizzy.
- Too tired to get out of bed or walk to the bathroom.

## Important Signs and Symptoms:

Report symptoms to doctor or nurse during clinic hours today.

- Fatigue is getting worse.
- Staying in bed all day.
- Other symptoms occur with increased fatigue.

- Increased weakness or exhaustion.
- Drowsiness or confusion.
- Loss of balance.
- Catching your breath.

## What You Can Do At Home:

Establish regular rest and sleep periods.

- ➔ Set up a regular daily schedule for nap and sleep times.
- ➔ Keep active during the day to sleep better at night.
- ➔ Play soft music, put on the TV as a background sound, engage in meditation or prayer, or ask a nurse or family member for a back rub to help you sleep or rest.
- ➔ Keep a diary for one week to monitor fatigue levels. Note what you think may be contributing factors



Conserve energy.

- ➔ Rest between bathing, treatments and exercise.
- ➔ Do things or be active only for a short time.
- ➔ Plan activities, such as exercise, visiting or trips when feeling the most rested and energetic.
- ➔ Decide on the most important activities for the day. Be realistic.
- ➔ Regular exercise helps reduce fatigue- sounds contradictory, but it helps.
- ➔ Eat snacks between meals to keep up energy.
- ➔ Plan ahead and organize your work.