



### Be Good to Yourself

Have some fun! Do things that will help to restore your spirit and energy. Bird watching, visiting with a good friend, and listening to music are all great activities. Try to do these pleasant things at least three times each week. If these do not help, talk to your doctor about medication that may help improve your mood.

### Common Questions

#### How much should I rest if I am fatigued?

While you may want to increase your sleep time and take occasional naps, too much rest can actually make you feel more tired. Try to keep up your activity level each day, but do not push yourself too hard. Resting too much during the day may make it hard to sleep at night.

#### How do I know if I am making progress fighting my fatigue?

We recommend you keep a journal and chart your response to activities. This will help you recognize your limits and see your progress. It will also help you discuss your progress with your doctor.

### How can my family and friends help?

Ask for their assistance with things that tire you. Let them know this is not ordinary tiredness you feel. You may need to defer some activities until you feel stronger.

### What emotional support is helpful?

Some patients find it helpful to join a support group where they can share their feelings and concerns with other patients. Noting your feelings in a journal may also be helpful, as well as meditation and being with good friends and family.

### Remember

- Alternate rest and activity
- Eat well
- Ask for help from family and friends
- Plan ahead so you are efficient and save time and energy as much as possible
- Discuss your fatigue and its management with your healthcare team

### Contributing to the Community's Health

Frequently people inquire as to how they may make a contribution to the community's health. We encourage you to consider Glendale Adventist Medical Center's Healthcare Foundation whenever you or your family desire to make a difference in the health of our community. For more information, please call (818) 409-8055.

Physician Referral (818)409-8100

# Managing Cancer-Related Fatigue

at Glendale Adventist Medical Center



There are different side effects to cancer treatment. Your doctor will discuss with you how best to relieve cancer-related fatigue.

[www.glendaleadventist.com](http://www.glendaleadventist.com)

Glendale Adventist Medical Center



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## *Understanding Cancer-Related Fatigue*

Fatigue is one of the most common side effects of treatment in cancer patients. This fatigue can be physical, mental or even spiritual. It can range from mild to severe, where just getting out of bed feels challenging. Everyday activities, such as household chores or walking a short distance, can feel overwhelming. This is more than the tiredness one feels because of a poor night's sleep. It is important to try to relieve fatigue, because you want to have enough energy to complete your treatments, and enjoy a good quality of life during treatment.

## *Reasons for Fatigue*

The majority of cancer patients will feel tired at some points during their treatment cycle. Medications you are taking, lack of sleep, poor nutrition, weight loss, hormonal imbalances, and energy used by your body to repair itself after radiation, chemotherapy or surgery may all be fatiguing. Emotions such as anxiety and depression can make you feel tired.

Chemotherapy treatments may affect your ability to produce red blood cells. A very low red blood cell count (known as anemia) limits the body's ability to distribute energizing oxygen. Anemic patients can also feel short of breath, which slows them down.

## *Signs of Fatigue*

- Mental or physical exhaustion or weariness
- Feeling like you have no energy to do regular activities
- Lack of desire to do everyday activities
- Difficulty concentrating or thinking clearly
- Less attention spent on personal appearance
- A feeling of heaviness in your arms and/or legs, making them difficult to move

## *Anemia-Related Fatigue*

Your blood will be tested periodically during treatment to monitor for anemia. If your blood count dips too low, the doctor may prescribe blood transfusions and/or medications such as Procrit®, to help your bone marrow recover its red blood cell production capacity.



## *Managing My Fatigue*

### **Rest and Energy Conservation**

While rest and sleep are important, you need to be careful not to overdo it. Too much rest can actually make you feel more tired. Your doctor may prescribe a sleeping aid if you cannot sleep well. Rest before you get tired and know that some days may be better than others.

### **Activity and Exercise**

You should try to stay active as much as you can. Regular but gentle exercise, such as walking, yoga or Tai Chi may help you feel more energized. Alternate rest and activity.

### **Nutrition**

Drink plenty of fluids (eight to ten cups/day) and eat nutritious, high-protein, high-fat foods. Be sure to get enough calories to maintain your energy. Ask a dietitian about the nutrients you need. Work with your healthcare team to manage any stomach or bowel distress that can interfere with nutrition. If you are having trouble preparing meals, ask about community meal programs.

### **Task Management**

Spread your activities across the day and across the week, so you can have rest breaks in your schedule. Ask for help with housework and errands. If you need assistance, your hospital's social worker may be able to help you find community resources to assist you with everyday activities.