

# Fatigue

Fatigue can be described as tiredness, exhaustion, or lack of energy. It is a condition that affects the ability to perform any activity. This symptom can have many causes (including being a side effect of some pain medications) and is experienced by many hospice patients. It may also be associated with depressed feelings.

## Signs & Symptoms

- Unable to perform your normal activities.
- Lack of appetite—do not have the energy to eat.
- Sleepiness.
- Not talking.
- Feeling depressed.

## What can help relieve fatigue?

Because fatigue is a complex problem, it takes a group of actions to help reduce the symptoms. The care team will work with you, your caregiver, and your health care provider to find the causes for the fatigue and discuss treatments.

Here are some steps you can try:

- Gradually increase your activity.
- Conserve energy:
  - Plan, schedule and prioritize activities for the best times of day.
  - Keep a log of which time of day seems to be your best time.
  - Eliminate or postpone activities that are not a priority today.
  - Change your position. Do not just stay in bed.
  - Use sunlight/light source to help your body feel energized.
  - Try activities that restore your energy.
  - Encourage your family to be accepting of your new energy level.
  - Rearrange your environment to reduce exertion. For example: move your phone next to where you sit or lie, move your chair, or bed as close as possible to the bathroom.
- Rest and sleep better:
  - Listen to your body. Rest as needed.
  - Establish and continue a regular bedtime and waking time.

- Avoid interrupting sleep time to get continuous hours of sleep.
- Plan rest times or naps during the late morning and mid-afternoon.
- Avoid sleeping later in the day, which could interrupt your nighttime sleep.
- Ask your care team if using oxygen when you sleep would help you sleep better.
- Increase food intake:
  - Try nutritious, high-protein, nutrient-rich food.

- Eat favorite foods or drinks.
- Have small, frequent meals.
- Add protein supplements to foods or drinks.
- Do frequent mouth care (before and after meals).
- Ask your care team about possible use of medications to stimulate your appetite.

**Notify your care team anytime you have questions or concerns about fatigue.**