

Fatigue



Fatigue is a feeling of constant tiredness or weakness and can be physical, mental or a combination of both. It can affect anyone and most adults will experience fatigue at some point in their life.

Fatigue can cause a range of physical, mental and emotional symptoms including:

- chronic tiredness or sleepiness
- headaches
- dizziness
- slowed reflexes and impaired co-ordination
- poor concentration
- low motivation
- reduced immune system function
- moodiness, such as irritability
- loss of appetite
- impaired decision-making and judgement
- blurry vision
- muscle weakness

Fatigue is not a condition or disease - it is a symptom resulting from underlying causes. In order to reduce fatigue, you first need to understand what is causing it. Although there are a wide range of causes of fatigue, the most common are linked to lifestyle and general wellbeing issues.

Poor diet is a common cause of fatigue. If you want more energy you need to maintain a healthy and well balanced diet. Remaining well hydrated and eating regularly is also important to maintain energy levels throughout the day.

Lack of sleep or sleep disturbances are also common causes of fatigue. Many of us simply don't get enough sleep. Typically, adults need about 7-9 hours of sleep each night.

Not getting enough exercise is another big contributor to fatigue. Although you may think that exercise will just make you feel more tired, research shows that exercise actually boosts energy levels.

Although there are many possible contributing factors, if you are feeling fatigued, start with the basics and focus on the common causes above.

If you are getting enough sleep, nutrition is good and you are exercising regularly, but are still feeling exhausted, you should consult with your health care professional.

PREVENTING INCIDENTS AND INJURIES

Some key factors in preventing fatigue are:

- **Choose healthy snacks:**
Don't reach for the caffeine and sugary foods as they only offer a temporary energy boost which quickly wears off, usually leaving you feeling worse as your blood sugar levels drop.
- **Improve the quality of your sleep:**
Avoid caffeine and alcohol in the hours just before bedtime, turn off the TV before bed and ensure your bedroom is quiet. Try to go to bed and get up at the same time each day as a consistent sleep schedule helps set your body's 'internal clock.'
- **Get more exercise:**
The minimum amount of exercise recommended for good health is 30 minutes of 'moderate' activity (such as a brisk walk) at least 5 days a week. Being active not only helps you fight fatigue, it also reduces stress and helps you sleep better at night.