Energy Conservation Techniques to Decrease Fatigue

**Purpose**
- To educate patients and their caregivers about fatigue and energy conservation techniques.
- To provide general recommendations for energy conservation when dealing with fatigue.
- To provide general and disease-specific resources for individuals affected by fatigue.

**What is fatigue?**
- Fatigue is a constant feeling of exhaustion that can lead to less energy to perform physical and mental work.1(p.182)
  - Fatigue is an individualized experience that affects each person differently.
  - There are many causes of fatigue. Some are more serious than others.
  - Fatigue may be related to physical health, mental health, weight, nutrition, medications, sleep habits, or a specific medical condition.
- Your health care provider can help determine the difference between fatigue and sleepiness.2
  - Your health care provider may recommend tests to help identify possible medical causes of your fatigue. Conditions related to fatigue include anemia, electrolyte imbalance, thyroid problems, liver disease, human immunodeficiency virus, hepatitis C, diabetes, sleep apnea, sleep disorders, obesity, heart disease, cancer, chronic infection, and renal disease.2-4 Psychiatric conditions—such as depression, anxiety and panic, or eating disorders—can also cause fatigue.5
  - You may experience fatigue after surgery or medical treatments like chemotherapy or radiation.

- Rest and sleep help to reduce short-term fatigue.
- Unrelenting exhaustion is more intense and lasts longer. Rest does not relieve it.
  - It decreases energy, motivation, and concentration.
  - It may affect emotional and psychosocial well-being.6
  - People with unrelenting exhaustion may be tested for chronic fatigue syndrome.
  - Information on when to see a physician about continuous fatigue can be found at many medical information websites (several reliable sites are included in the resource section at the end of this document).
- Many health care providers can help you manage your fatigue.
  - Talk to your primary care provider about your fatigue and discuss what treatment options are best for you.
  - Your primary care provider can make appropriate referrals and an individualized plan of care to address your fatigue concerns.5
  - Health care providers who can offer specialized treatment for fatigue, include: physicians, psychologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, nurses, and dieticians.

**What is energy conservation?**
- Energy conservation involves changing an activity or the environment to decrease the level of energy required to complete a task.
- The goal is to improve a person’s ability to manage his/her fatigue throughout an entire day.
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- With proper use, an individual can decrease their overall level of fatigue while still being able to perform daily tasks and routines at home, at work, and in community.\(^1\)

**Additional resources on fatigue**
- Peters BR. What if it is not your sleep? Exploring other causes of daytime fatigue. Available at: [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/)
- Cleveland Clinic Wellness Team. Always tired? 7 hidden causes for your fatigue. Available at: [https://health.clevelandclinic.org/always-tired-7-hidden-causes-for-your-fatigue/](https://health.clevelandclinic.org/always-tired-7-hidden-causes-for-your-fatigue/).
- When to see a doctor. Available at: [https://www.mayoclinic.org/symptoms/fatigue/basics/when-to-see-doctor/sym-20050894](https://www.mayoclinic.org/symptoms/fatigue/basics/when-to-see-doctor/sym-20050894).
Additional Resources for Specific Medical Conditions

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<td>Stroke</td>
<td>1. American Heart Association/American Stroke Association. Fighting through fatigue after stroke Available at: <a href="http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/LifeAfterStroke/RegainingIndependence/PhysicalChallenges/Fatigue-After-Stroke_UCM_467435_Article.jsp#.WgtT1o-cEdV">http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/LifeAfterStroke/RegainingIndependence/PhysicalChallenges/Fatigue-After-Stroke_UCM_467435_Article.jsp#.WgtT1o-cEdV</a>.</td>
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Authorship
This page was developed by Archana Vatwani, PT, DPT, MBA, CLWT, CDP (e-mail address: avatwani@nova.edu), and Rania Margonis, PT, DPT.

Disclaimer
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References