



### What is Cancer Related Fatigue?

Fatigue is “feeling tired” or lacking energy to do your normal activities. Everyday fatigue gets better with rest. Rest may not improve cancer-related fatigue, and minor activity may be exhausting. According to the American Cancer Society, 80-100% of cancer patients experience fatigue.

### Causes of Cancer Related Fatigue:

Multiple factors can increase cancer related fatigue. Your doctor may screen for anemia (low blood counts), thyroid issues, or heart trouble. Sleep problems, depression, or pain can also increase fatigue after cancer treatment. Discuss these issues with your doctor.

**Coping with Fatigue:** Talk to your doctor about fatigue that is greatly impacting your quality of life.

#### Exercise

- Regular physical activity and exercise is often the **BEST** treatment for cancer related fatigue.
- Choose activities that you enjoy so you can stick with an exercise plan,
- Listen to your body. Choose times of the day when you have the most energy.
- Exercise regularly, but save your energy on days that you are most fatigued.
- Consider a Physical Therapy evaluation.
- Join **LIVESTRONG at the YMCA**, a free 12-week program that emphasizes health and wellness.

#### Eat Well

- Food should be high in fruits and vegetables, low in processed meats, and alcohol.
- Talk with our Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, board-certified in oncology for nutrition information, meal planning, and other strategies to improve survivorship after cancer treatment.

#### Sleep

- Good sleep is important for overall health, and can reduce fatigue.
- Avoid caffeine and nicotine as they can disturb sleep.
- Limit yourself to one short nap, less than 30 minutes.
- Increase exposure to bright light during the day, and decrease exposure to light (screens from TVs or phones) in the evening before bed.
- Talk to a sleep specialist if you have significant problems with sleep.

#### Save your energy

- Take rest breaks as often as you need them
- Prioritize - choose the most important tasks for the day and focus on those first
- Pace yourself - take your time to avoid using too much energy too quickly
- Schedule - have a regular routine, and do challenging tasks when you have the most energy
- Ask for help - have other people do tasks that you know fatigue you

#### Modify your routine

- Put things you often use in easy to reach areas (front of shelves, on the counter)
- Use a basket or cart to transport objects.
- Sit rather than stand: Sit down to dry off, get dressed, iron or fold clothes, and prepare meals.

#### Motivate

- If motivation or emotions are an issue please ask to speak to a social worker, a chaplain, or a member of your health care team. Consider a cancer support group.

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- Ask your medical team for a referral for **LIVESTRONG at the YMCA**.
  - Smoking Cessation: call the **Nicotine Independence Program** at **(317) 456-9080 ext 11425**
  - Physical Therapy: DANVILLE **(317) 745-3420** • HRH AVON YMCA **(317) 272-4186**
  - Call **(317) 745-3769** for an appointment with a Registered Dietitian, board-certified in oncology.
  - For sleep problems call **(317) 745-3680** for **Hendricks Regional Health Sleep Disorders Center**.
  - If you have emotional or motivational concerns, call **(317) 745-3544** to speak with a social worker, **(317) 745-3417** to speak with chaplain, or contact your healthcare team.
  - Join our Cancer Support Group <sup>2nd</sup> Tuesday monthly at 3:00pm at the Danville Hospital.



### Tips For Getting Better Sleep –

One of the ways to keep the fatigue down is to make sure that you are getting *good* sleep. Sleep is when the body does its best healing. Good sleep is helpful for many aspects of your health: physical, mental and emotional. Here are some tips to help you do just that.

1. **Try to go to bed and get up around the same time.** Your body gets into more of a routine and that will help you get better sleep.
2. **Avoid caffeine late in the day.** Caffeine, found in chocolate, cola, tea and coffee, is a stimulant and can keep you from falling asleep.
3. **Watch your diet.** Eating heavy meals or spicy foods before bedtime can make you uncomfortable. A light snack, however, can keep you from feeling hungry and help you sleep better. Limit fluid intake in the evenings especially 2 hours prior to going to sleep. If blood sugar is an issue has a snack or glucose tables near your bed.
4. **Exercise regularly.** Regular exercise has been shown to help sleep. Exercising in the morning or afternoon, at least 3 hours before bedtime, may help you get a deeper, more restful sleep.
5. **Create a relaxing bedtime routine.** Read a book, listen to music, take a warm bath, and make sure that bedding and/or clothing are comfortable. The room should be dark with no distractions (like cell phones, tablets, television or a noisy clock)
6. **Use your bed for only two things, sleeping and being intimate with your partner.**
7. **Keep the temperature cool in your bedroom.** Extreme temperatures can disrupt your sleep. Most find a temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit to be ideal, attempt to have the temperature to your liking.
8. **Get out of bed if you are not sleeping.** If you don't fall asleep within 15 to 30 minutes, get up. Go back to bed when you are sleepy.
9. **Discuss any side effects of your treatment that may be keeping you from getting a good night's sleep.** Examples may be nausea, vomiting, hot flashes, pain or urinary frequency.
10. **Ask your healthcare provider if any of your medications may be keeping you from sleeping well.** You may be able to take them at a different time of the day or change a medication if it is preventing you from sleeping.
11. **Try putting a journal near your bed** and write down your thoughts, to do list, issues and prayers and know it will be there in the morning.
12. **Partner is keeping you up,** may want to try and sleep in a different room, use ear plugs, or if they're snoring is an issue they may need a sleep test

Adapted from the National Cancer Institute