

Fatigue

It is highly likely that you will experience fatigue after your treatment. This can be particularly frustrating at a time you want to get back into 'normal' life and return to the activities you engaged in before treatment.

Cancer-related fatigue feels different than simply needing sleep. It is often described as feeling 'bone weary'. Sometimes there is an identifiable cause to the fatigue, such as anaemia that can often follow treatment, but often there is not.

The good news is that there are a number of things you can do to reduce the feeling of fatigue and improve your energy.

Get to know your energy patterns and pace yourself

Some people find they feel better in the mornings, others later in the day. You might find it helpful to rate your energy levels on a scale of 0 - 10 for a week.

Take a note of how you feel each morning, mid-morning, lunch, afternoon, evening and just before bedtime. Plan your activities around those times when you expect to feel your best. Allow time for rest or gentler activities, like an easy walk, when you anticipate you will not feel as energetic.

Prioritise and set realistic expectations for the day

While it is great to have a number of things to look forward to every day, if you set your sights too high you'll risk feeling disappointed when you've not completed them all at the end of the day.

Try prioritising what you would like to accomplish. On days when you feel better you can tackle your list, but on those occasions when you feel fatigued it will be best to rest and

Delegate!

This is often one of the most challenging things to do. You probably feel you should be able to do things yourself now that your treatment has ended. However, if you try to do everything you may actually accomplish very little.

Instead, be realistic about what you can do and delegate the rest. In time you will be able to do more.

For now, allow others to contribute to your recovery; it's quite likely they will be pleased they can do something to help you.

Mind your mood

Mind your mood. Mental fatigue and feeling blue can often contribute to physical exhaustion. If you have noticed that you are unable to enjoy the things you used to, even those activities which require little physical energy, then your fatigue may be caused by more than physical side-effects.

Consider speaking to someone, a friend, relative, or counsellor.

Try to accommodate

It can be frustrating if you find you can't complete something you thought you would be able to.

However, that doesn't mean you have to give it up all together!

Returning to your pre-cancer activities will not happen overnight Just like taking on any task you haven't undertaken for a while, it will require small steps.

Manage your sleep

You may need to sleep more than you expected and you might also find it difficult to get a good night's sleep.

Try not to worry too much about this - anxiety can impact on your ability to relax into sleep.

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