



Healthy ageing & lifestyle

Fact Sheet No.5

Fatigue Part 2: How to manage fatigue

Recognising there is a problem

You may not realise that you are becoming tired or increasingly tired. A friend or family member may comment that you look tired. You may find yourself turning down invitations and not really understanding why.

When you recognise that you are suffering from fatigue, here are some approaches you may wish to consider:

Seeking medical advice

You should seek medical advice if other symptoms arise at the same time as your fatigue e.g. unplanned weight loss, sleep disturbance or depression. You may be required to have blood tests to eliminate conditions such as anaemia, or an underactive thyroid. There may be a local specialist clinic or facility where you can get advice or treatment and have your fatigue level monitored.

What treatments are available?

Treating the symptoms

If pain is keeping you awake at night you should seek treatment, you can ask your GP for a referral to a Pain Management Clinic. Most District General Hospitals run pain clinics, but there may be a long waiting list.

Counselling

If you opt for some sessions of counselling, via referral from your GP or privately, try to ensure that the person you see has experience of working with people who are living with your particular condition.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

This therapy helps to manage your problems by changing the way you think, and ultimately the way you behave. You can use self-help books or ask your GP for the name of a qualified therapist, or even search the internet for a local therapist.

You may decide to deal with your fatigue on your own, below are a few suggestions to consider:

Self Help

This doesn't necessarily mean doing it alone, you can still engage family and friends to help you. Also, there are self-help books including audio books which can be obtained via Amazon.

Complimentary therapies

You may consider using complimentary therapies in conjunction with conventional treatments such as your prescribed drug therapy.

Complimentary therapies include massage, relaxation techniques, hydrotherapy and mindfulness.



These therapies work for some people but not others and there is generally a cost implication. Some therapies may be difficult to access in your area or country, so try to source therapists where you have a personal recommendation.

Top tip: It would be wise to check with your medical team that your chosen therapy is safe for you.

Coping strategies

- current advice suggests that going to bed and getting up at the same time every day helps with sleep patterns; if you rely on a carer it may be difficult to stick to strict timings
- setting a time during the day to rest and relax may be difficult to achieve but is worth trying: turn off mobile phones and other distractions such as computers and TV
- working full-time may be contributing to your fatigue so consider working part-time, or at home; particularly when heading towards retirement
- try shopping online once a week instead of going to the supermarket.

Disclaimer

The information and opinions shared on this website are based on my personal experience of working in the health sector and research I have carried out whilst writing articles; it is of a general nature and should not be used as a substitute for seeking medical advice. My aim is to ensure that this information is accurate and kept up to date, but you should always consult the appropriate healthcare professionals if you have a concern about your health.

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