

Fatigue and Depression

All the methods of treating cancer treatment are powerful. Treatment may go on for weeks or months. It may even cause more illness or discomfort than the initial disease. Many patients say they feel exhausted and depressed, and unable to concentrate. Fatigue during cancer treatment can be related to a number of causes: not eating, inactivity, low blood counts, depression, poor sleep, and side effects of medicine. It is important for you to raise the issue with your health care team if you are having fatigue. Together, you can decide what is causing the problem, since many of the causes can be treated.

Fatigue and depression aren't eating problems in and of themselves, but they can affect your interest in food and your ability to shop and prepare healthy meals. Here are some suggestions that may help:

- Talk about your feelings and your fears. Being open about your emotions can make them seem more manageable. Consider talking with your nurse or social worker, who can help you find ways to lessen your worries and fears.
- Become familiar with your treatment, possible side effects, and ways of coping. Being knowledgeable and acting on that knowledge will help you feel more in control. Don't be afraid to talk with your doctor and ask questions.
- Make sure you get enough rest:
 - take several naps or rest breaks during the day, rather than one long rest
 - plan your day to include rest breaks
 - make rest time special with a good book in a comfortable chair or a favorite video with a friend
- try easier or shorter versions of your usual activities; don't push yourself to do more than you can manage.
- Save your favorite foods for times that aren't associated with treatment sessions. That way, they won't be linked to an uncomfortable or distressing event.
- Take short walks or get regular exercise, if possible. Some people find this helps to lessen their fatigue and raise their spirits.