What Is Cancer Treatment-Related Fatigue?
Cancer treatment-related fatigue is feeling tired and weak during treatment for cancer. It is a very common side effect.

Fatigue can also cause distress and feeling like you have little ability to function in daily life. If you have fatigue, it often seems like you have to rest more than is reasonable for your level of exertion.

What Will My Doctor or Nurse Do?
Your health care team will review your overall health to find any factor that might contribute to your fatigue:
- Anemia
- Emotional distress or depression
- Infection
- Nutrition problems
- Pain
- Other illnesses
- Sleep problems

Your health care team may recommend medicines that can improve your energy level or help you sleep. Before you take any over-the-counter energy supplement, be sure to discuss it with your doctor. Keep your health care team updated about your fatigue, especially if you notice any sudden changes.

Symptoms of Fatigue
- A general weakness or limb heaviness
- Diminished concentration or attention
- Problems with memory and thinking clearly
- Less interest in usual activities
- Difficulty completing daily tasks
- Sleep problems such as insomnia or waking up still feeling tired

Cancer-related fatigue is different than other types of fatigue. It can be overwhelming; it is not always relieved with rest; and it does not always go away as soon as treatment ends.

Remember:
- Fatigue is normal during cancer treatment.
- Fatigue does not mean the cancer is getting worse.
- Fatigue does not mean the treatment is not working.
- Fatigue is not caused by a lack of willpower.
You may need treatment and support if you have fatigue.

Discuss cancer-related fatigue with your health care team.

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Strategies for Managing Fatigue
Walking and other forms of exercise can help you feel better. Don’t get discouraged if you’re not able to walk very long. Ask your health care provider about what level of exercise is right for you. Also, take part in the fitness program offered through the Linda B. and Robert B. Wiggins Wellness-Survivorship Center. For more information call 801-587-4585.

Acupuncture is a therapeutic technique adapted from traditional Chinese medicine. Trained practitioners insert hair-thin, sterile, single-use needles through the skin at specific points on the body to help promote healing and reduce side effects such as fatigue. To make an appointment, call 801-587-4585.
Conserve Your Energy

- Set priorities and give tasks to others who offer to help out.
- Take short naps and rest often. Avoid sleeping too much during the day, which may interfere with getting a good night’s sleep.
- Use assistive devices such as canes or walkers if you need them.

Distraction

- Get together with small groups of friends and family for short periods of time.
- Play music you enjoy.
- If you have trouble concentrating, try reading short stories and news articles.
- Keep in touch with family and friends through e-mail and social media websites.
- Try activities in nature such as bird watching or visiting a park, lake, or other outdoor area.

Other Suggestions

- Talk to a dietitian who can suggest dietary changes to help manage fatigue. To meet with a registered dietitian at Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI), call 801-587-4585.
- Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.
- Avoid caffeine.
- Exercise early in the day rather than before bed.
- Talk with a member of HCI’s Patient and Family Support Services to help manage stress.
- Share your feelings and experience in a support group, journal, or Internet blog. Call the G. Mitchell Morris Cancer Learning Center at 1-888-424-2100 toll free for help finding support groups and resources.

For more information about cancer-related fatigue, call the G. Mitchell Morris Cancer Learning Center at 1-888-424-2100 or the Linda B. and Robert B. Wiggins Wellness-Survivorship Center at 801-587-4585. We want to help you feel better.