

Fatigue is one of the most common and persistent side effects of cancer treatment. It can feel like extreme tiredness, weakness, or exhaustion that rest does not fully relieve³⁶. Fatigue may begin before, during, or after treatment and can last for weeks, months, or even years¹³.

Possible causes include:

- The cancer itself
- Chemotherapy, radiation, or other treatments
- Anemia (low red blood cell count)
- Pain
- Sleep problems
- Emotional stress, anxiety, or depression
- Poor nutrition or dehydration¹²³⁴

Management strategies:

- **Medical evaluation:**
Your healthcare team should check for treatable causes such as anemia, pain, depression, or sleep disorders¹²⁴.
- **Physical activity:**
Gentle exercise, such as walking or yoga, is proven to help reduce fatigue and improve energy and mood²⁴⁵⁷. Aim for regular activity as tolerated, with guidance from your care team.
- **Sleep hygiene:**
Practice good sleep habits—maintain a regular sleep schedule, create a restful environment, and limit daytime naps to less than one hour to avoid disrupting nighttime sleep²⁴.
- **Nutrition:**
Eat small, frequent, nutrient-rich meals and stay hydrated. Consult a registered dietitian if you have trouble eating or drinking enough¹².
- **Energy conservation:**
Prioritize important activities, pace yourself, and take breaks as needed. Delegate tasks

when possible²⁴.

- **Address emotional health:**

Counseling, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), and stress management techniques can help if fatigue is worsened by anxiety or depression¹²⁵.

- **Complementary therapies:**

Mind-body practices such as mindfulness, meditation, and relaxation exercises may also reduce fatigue for some people²⁵.

When to contact your care team:

- If fatigue is severe, worsening, or interferes with daily life
- If you have symptoms such as shortness of breath, dizziness, or chest pain
- If you suspect anemia or other medical issues

Fatigue is common but manageable. With a combination of medical support, lifestyle changes, and self-care, most people find some relief¹²³⁴.

1. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/fatigue-weakness-sleep/fatigue.html>
2. <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/fatigue>
3. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/cancer/in-depth/cancer-fatigue/art-20047709>
4. <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/coping/physically/fatigue/managing-treating-cancer-fatigue>
5. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9883329/>
6. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/5230-cancer-fatigue>
7. <https://www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/patient-education/managing-related-fatigue>
8. <https://www.lls.org/treatment/managing-side-effects/cancer-related-fatigue>