Tips

Physiotherapy

Regular physical activity can reduce fatigue. In physiotherapy you can learn adapted exercises that you can integrate into your everyday life. The Cancer League can recommend group courses on the topic of "cancer and sport".

Nutritional advice

Anaemia or an unbalanced diet can make your fatigue worse. You can discuss your nutritional status at a nutritional consultation.

Psycho-oncology support

A psychooncologist can help you bear the mental burden of the disease. Cognitive behavioural therapy can help you improve sleep-promoting behaviour and thus reduce your fatigue. Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) can support you in relaxation. Let us advise you.

Further information on this topic

- **«Coping with Fatigue (Tiredness)»** (Macmillan Cancer Support, 2018) **–** Comprehensive guide to understand cancer-related fatigue and practical tips for managing it in daily life
- **«Exercise for People Living with Cancer»** (Cancer Council Australia, 2023) **–** Guide outlining the benefits of exercise before, during, and after cancer treatment, with practical tips and example exercises
- **«Nutrition for People Living with Cancer»** (Cancer Council Australia, 2025) – Practical guide on nutrition for people with cancer, their families, and friends

This brochure was produced in collaboration with patients and experts.
Further information can be found on the website.

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Fatigue

Good to know

Exhaustion in cancer is defined as a persistent intense feeling of tiredness. This exhaustion cannot be compared with “normal tiredness” and similarly cannot be relieved by more sleep. The exhaustion interferes considerably with daily living.

Exhaustion can be brought on by the disease and the treatments. Anaemia, malnutrition, thyroid disorders, pain, nausea, emotional distress or alcohol and drug use can additionally worsen the exhaustion.

The fatigue should be examined by a doctor to determine the cause and treat it if possible. If no cause is found, measures can be taken to reduce it.

Usually, the fatigue gradually decreases after the therapies are completed. However, persistent fatigue is not a sign of disease progression.

Fatigue

You feel...	Or you notice...	What you can do for yourself...
	• Slightly reduced physical capacity	• Try to keep on doing your activities. Exercise regularly by walking (briskly), swimming or cycling. • Take your reserve medicines for pain and nausea if needed. See Symptom Navi: «Nausea and vomiting» and «Pain». • Organise additional help with housework, etc. See Symptom Navi: Help at home • Try to keep busy doing something you enjoy.
	• Increasingly limited physical capacity • Difficulty concentrating • Difficulty sleeping • Shortness of breath • Lack of motivation • Increasing difficulties in performing daily activities	• Managing persistent fatigue can be challenging for you and those around you. Talk about it with each other. The treatment team can support you at this time. • Allow yourself regular breaks throughout the day. However, do not sleep for more than 45 minutes at a time during the day, so as not to disrupt your day/night rhythm. • Try to ration your energy sensibly. Plan strenuous activities for those times of day when you have the most strength and energy. Prioritise and also plan enjoyable activities. • Try to motivate yourself by listening to music and doing specific exercises (progressive muscle relaxation, breathing exercises, yoga). Ask for advice. • Morning light therapy sessions of 30 to 40 minutes can improve your sleep quality at night. Medical light therapy lamps must not be used for eye diseases.
	• Severe exhaustion • Worsening of the symptoms in the yellow section • Fever of 38 °C and above • Waking up and staying awake is becoming almost impossible • Persistent depression, loss of ability to feel joy or sorrow	• Contact the treatment team.