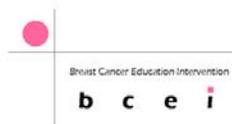




MENTAL FATIGUE

Fatigue, the feeling of being very tired, can affect both your body and your mind. Mental fatigue affects your mood. It may also affect how well you are able to organize your day and your ability to focus. People who have mental fatigue report feeling weighed down. If you are having mental fatigue, here are some tips to help you cope with its effects:

- **Make a list of what you plan to do each day.** Include only the things that must be done that day. Keep a second list of things you'd like to do if you have the extra energy. Save your energy for the things that mean the most to you. Plan what you will do for the times or days you feel your best.
- **Check your goals.** Being careful and realistic in what you choose to do will reduce mental as well as physical fatigue.
- **Learn to pace yourself.** You can do more by spreading what you need to do over the entire day. Take rest breaks as you need. Rest breaks save energy for the things you want to do.
- **Take a mental break** between activities and walk or sit quietly in a peaceful setting. Being in a peaceful setting can help counter mental fatigue. Watch birds or other wildlife, gaze out at a peaceful view from a window, garden or tend to plants.
- **Pamper yourself** with a bubble bath, get your nails done or a massage, listen to your favorite music, or watch a sunset.
- **Take time** for prayer and meditation, which can help you think about your true priorities.
- **Save time** for the things you really enjoy like reading, drawing, listening to music or spending time with your family.
- **Listen to your body** and rest when you need to. Don't take naps in the late afternoon or evening since this may affect your nighttime sleep.



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MENTAL FATIGUE

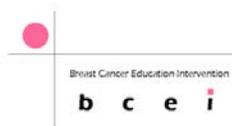
- **Exercise.** Take short walks or do light exercises such as stretching if you are able and stay as active as you can. Many people find that light exercise such as walking can really decrease their fatigue.
- **Enjoy what you are able to do,** even the small things such as a short walk or taking a shower without help.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Keep the right levels of protein, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals to ensure good nutrition.
- **Reduce stress** (e.g., relaxation, deep breathing, hypnosis, guided imagery, or distraction) to restore energy.
- **Talk to your family** about your fatigue. If your family does not know about your fatigue it can lead to communication problems, anger, and feelings of guilt.
- **Remind yourself: Cancer Fatigue is real!**– It is not in your head and you are not alone. Many survivors experience this same problem just as you do.
- **Keep a fatigue journal of your progress.** Note when fatigue occurs, lifts or lingers. This can help you to make a realistic daily schedule.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

Talk to your doctor or nurse about your fatigue. Tell them at once if you think you are depressed, can't get out of bed for 24 hours or notice your fatigue is getting worse. If you keep a fatigue journal bring it with you to help them decide what can be done to help your fatigue get better.

Useful websites:

- <http://www.webmd.com/breast-cancer/guide/combating-fatigue-breast-cancer#1>



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