



CARING FOR SOMEONE WITH PHYSICAL NEEDS

Feeling Tired After Stroke (Fatigue)

Fatigue is defined as loss of energy or strength. Around 30-70% of stroke survivors feel very tired or have fatigue.

What Do You Need to Know?

It is normal for your loved one to tire easily. After a stroke, simple tasks, like sitting up or standing, may be exhausting. With time, your loved one should get back strength and energy.

Health issues that decrease energy after a stroke include:

- Muscle weakness
- Paralysis
- Pain
- Poor nutrition and weight loss
- Sadness or depression

Why Is It Important to Get Help?

Fatigue can slow down your loved one's recovery. It is important for your healthcare team to learn the cause of fatigue. Sometimes fatigue is due to medical problems that can be treated. At other times, fatigue is due to side effects of medicines. The good news is there are treatments and ways to decrease fatigue.

What Treatments Should You Discuss with Your Healthcare Team?

- Medicines often help if fatigue is due to pain or depression.
- A social worker, psychologist, or psychiatrist can help your loved one with depression.
- A physical therapist (PT) can teach exercises to build strength. A PT can show your loved one how to move and save energy.
- An occupational therapist (OT) can teach new ways to do everyday tasks to save energy. An OT can suggest changes to make in your home to help your loved one move around.

Helpful Tips

- Encourage your loved one to eat healthy foods like fruits and vegetables.
- Give your loved one plenty of water to drink. Decreased amounts of liquids can cause fatigue.
- Plan frequent rest periods.
- Help your loved one get a good night's sleep. Limit caffeine after lunch. Get up and go to bed at the same time each day.
- Help your loved one stay active. Too much bed rest can weaken muscles. Work with your healthcare team to develop an exercise plan.

Remember

- Fatigue is a common problem after stroke.
- Talk with your healthcare team about your loved one's fatigue.
- Frequent rest periods are important.
- Help your loved one exercise and stay active.

More Resources

The following resources contain internet links. The location of internet pages can change. Therefore the links provided may not always work. For the most current version of this list, go to <http://www.rorc.research.va.gov/rescue/resources>. This page will be updated frequently.

Link Disclaimer: Links to information and Web sites outside of the Department of Veterans Affairs do not indicate an endorsement of products or services offered by the sites. In addition, these sites may have privacy and security policies that are inconsistent with those of VA.

American Stroke Association

Web: <http://www.strokeassociation.org>

Phone: 1-888-478-7653

The American Stroke Association has information about stroke-related physical problems. They have a fact sheet called "Let's Talk About Feeling Tired After Stroke." Go to this link:

<http://www.strokeassociation.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3018610>

My HealthVet (MHV)

Web: <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>

My HealthVet (MHV) provides trusted information on stroke and other health conditions. It also provides resources for stroke caregivers and tools to track your loved one's health.

Also visit the Caregiver Assistance Center on the My HealthVet Web site. This section provides more information on caregiving.

- Go to: <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>
- Click on the button that says "Enter Here"
- Click on "Research Health" on the top bar, then "Healthy Living Centers"
- Click on "Caregiver Assistance"

National Stroke Association

Web: <http://www.stroke.org>

Phone: 1-800-787-6537

The National Stroke Association has helpful information on recovery after stroke. They have information on "Recovery After Stroke: Managing Fatigue." Go to this link: http://www.stroke.org/site/DocServer/NSAFactSheet_Fatigue.pdf?docID=991

References: National Stroke Association. (2006). *Stroke Facts; Managing Fatigue*. Retrieved June 10, 2008, from: http://www.stroke.org/site/DocServer/NSAFactSheet_Fatigue.pdf?docID=991; American Stroke Association. (2008). *Let's Talk About Feeling Tired After Stroke*. Retrieved September 15, 2008, from: <http://www.strokeassociation.org/downloadable/stroke/1219774148960Feeling%20Tired%20After%20a%20Stroke.pdf>.



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