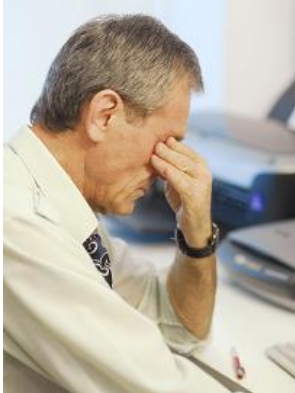


Tips for Fighting Fatigue



Frequently feeling tired? Around 20% of Americans have fatigue intense enough to interfere with their having a normal life. Many others have episodes of fatigue, generally defined as lack of energy and motivation. Fatigue is not the same thing as drowsiness, although the desire to sleep may accompany fatigue.

Fatigue can have a variety of physical and psychological causes such as allergies, persistent pain, anemia, depression or grief, drug and alcohol abuse, thyroid problems, or sleep disorders such as insomnia, sleep apnea, or narcolepsy. In addition, lifestyle causes, such as lack of sleep, stress and anxiety, poor eating habits, lack of exercise, and certain medications can cause fatigue.

To alleviate fatigue, first try the following lifestyle changes:

- Eat well, avoiding excess sugar and caffeine. Don't skip meals, and have several healthy snacks during the day.
- Exercise regularly, but not within an hour of bedtime.
- Get adequate and consistent amounts of sleep each night.
- Manage stress through exercise, yoga and meditation
- Keep a reasonable work and family schedule.
- Avoid nicotine, drug, and excessive alcohol use.

If the lifestyle changes above do not alleviate your fatigue, contact your healthcare provider, since unrelenting exhaustion could signal an underlying medical problem. Expect to be asked questions similar to those below:

- For how long have you had fatigue? Did it come on suddenly?
- Is the fatigue worse in the morning or at night?
- What is your diet and exercise regimen like?
- How many hours do you sleep at night? Do you awake feeling rested or fatigued? Do you have trouble falling asleep? Do you snore?
- How are your relationships? Have you lost anyone close to you recently?
- Do you feel bored, stressed, disappointed or unhappy?
- Have you had recent changes in appetite or weight?
- Do you fall asleep uncontrollably during the day?
- What medications do you take?

If warranted, your medical professional may order blood tests for anemia, thyroid problems and possible infections. If those are ruled out, the fatigue is most likely due to your lifestyle. Work with a nutritionist, behavioral health professional, personal trainer, or an appropriate medical professional to improve your habits.

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