



Fatigue

Dimock Community Health Center



What is fatigue?

Fatigue means feeling very tired or having little energy. Many people with HIV feel tired, even after getting many hours of sleep. A person with fatigue may not have the energy to do normal activities such as walking, shopping, or cooking. Someone with fatigue may have trouble concentrating or doing daily activities.

What causes fatigue?

Fatigue can be due to one or more of many different problems. These include:

Infection: Symptoms like fevers and sweating, which are your body's response to infection, can be very draining to a person's energy level and make them feel very tired.

Anemia: Can cause fatigue, because there are less red blood cells to carry oxygen around the body. If there is not enough oxygen getting to your body tissues, your body becomes tired.

Medications: Some medications can cause fatigue because they change sleeping patterns or have drowsiness as a side effect.

Stress: At times, things like family, work, and taking your medicines can be overwhelming. Stress can make you feel fatigued. Over time anxiety and depression, often found in people with HIV, can disrupt sleep, and cause fatigue. Some people use drugs or alcohol to sleep better, but substance use can actually make the problem worse.

What is the treatment for fatigue?

You and your health care provider can work together to treat the cause of your fatigue. If anemia is causing fatigue, your medications may need to be changed. If the fatigue is coming from an infection, your provider can also treat this. Be sure you report any new fever, night sweats, or new symptoms such as a cough or shortness of breath to your provider in order to get early treatment.

Good nutrition, sleep, and exercise help reduce fatigue. People who have anemia or infections need to eat a balanced diet. Talk with your provider about what you are eating to see if it is a healthy diet. Drugs, alcohol, or caffeine can affect your sleep. If you think a new medication that you are taking could be causing sleep problems, ask your provider about this.

Exercise can help in reducing fatigue. Moderate exercise makes a person feel better, keeps up good muscle tone, and helps your sleep.

Remember that only you know just how tired you feel. But if fatigue is changing your life for the worse, get in touch with your health care provider. Try and describe exactly how you feel to him or her, and you can work together to find what is causing your fatigue. The more you know about fatigue the easier it is to control.