



# Fatigue

With fatigue, a person is tired, weary, and lacks energy. Often, fatigue is a symptom of another health problem.

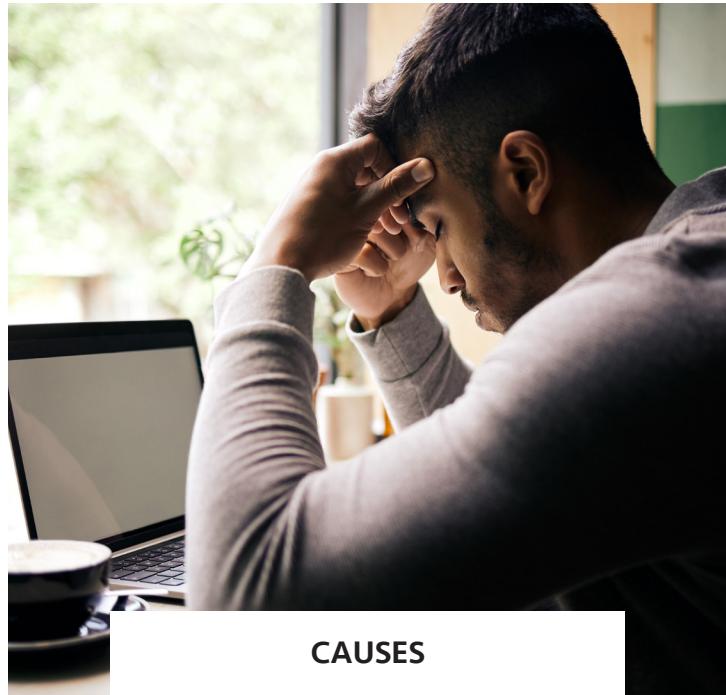


## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Feeling drained of energy
- Feeling exhausted
- Having a very hard time doing normal activities
- Having low motivation
- Feeling inadequate
- Having little desire for sex

## TREATMENT

Treatment depends on the cause. Tell your doctor about any other symptoms that occur with the fatigue. They will explore both physical and emotional causes.



## CAUSES

Causes that need medical care include anemia, depression, heart disease, low thyroid, lupus (the systemic type), and chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS).

Physical causes include:

- Lack of sleep
- Inadequate diet
- Side effects of medicines
- Allergies
- Drug or alcohol problems
- Being in hot, humid conditions
- The flu

Possible emotional causes are burnout, boredom, depression, and a major life change, such as divorce or retirement.

### **Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS)**

- Severe chronic fatigue that lasts at least 6 months and no other medical cause could be diagnosed
- Unable to do routine activities done prior to 6 months ago
- Fatigue worsens after a physical or emotional effort not present prior to 6 months ago
- Still tired after a full night of sleep
- Trouble learning, remembering, or concentrating OR feeling dizzy when standing upright



## TRIAGE QUESTIONS



With fatigue, does any heart attack warning sign occur?

NO

YES ➔ GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE



With fatigue, do you feel lightheaded; faint; or have a loss of balance or weakness, especially in one part or one side of the body?

NO

YES ➔ GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE



With fatigue, do these signs occur?

- The whites of your eyes and/or your skin looks yellow.
- Nausea and vomiting. Abdominal pain.
- Fever
- Stools are pale and clay-colored
- Dark-colored urine

NO

YES ➔ SEE DOCTOR



With extreme fatigue, do you have any of these signs?

- Fever, sore throat, and swollen lymph glands in the neck area
- Muscle pain for more than 2 weeks, flu-like symptoms, insomnia, and headache

NO

YES ➔ SEE DOCTOR



With fatigue, do other signs of depression occur?

NO

YES ➔ SEE DOCTOR



With fatigue and weakness, do signs and symptoms of anemia occur?

NO

YES ➔ SEE DOCTOR



With daytime fatigue, do signs of sleep apnea occur?

NO

YES ➔ SEE DOCTOR



With fatigue, do any of these signs of lupus occur?

- Joint pain for more than 3 months
- Fingers that get pale, numb, or uncomfortable in the cold
- Mouth sores for more than 2 weeks
- Low blood counts from anemia, low white-cell count, or low platelet count
- A “butterfly-shaped” rash on the cheeks for more than 1 month
- Skin rash (raised patches with scaling) after being in the sun
- Pain for more than 2 days when taking deep breaths

NO

YES ➔ SEE DOCTOR



With fatigue, do you have any of these signs?

- Passing urine often
- Increased thirst and hunger
- Rapid weight loss or you gain a lot of weight
- Extreme irritability or drowsiness
- Itching and/or skin infections that don’t clear up easily
- Hair loss and dry, thick, flaky skin
- Less tolerance to cold temperatures and numbness or tingling in the hands
- Blurred vision, double vision, or the loss of vision in one eye

NO

YES ➔ SEE DOCTOR



Do any of these conditions describe the fatigue?

- It occurred for no apparent reason, lasted for more than 2 weeks, and has kept you from doing your usual activities.
- It started after taking medicine.
- For a female, it hits hard right before or after each monthly menstrual period.
- Pregnancy is possible.

NO

YES ➔ SEE DOCTOR



USE SELF-CARE

CONTINUE IN NEXT COLUMN



## SELF-CARE / PREVENTION

- If fatigue is due to a medical problem, follow your doctor's or health care provider's guidelines for rest, diet, medication, etc.
- Get regular physical activity. Exercise can give you more energy, especially if you sit all day at work. Exercise can calm you, too.
- Cool off. Working or playing in hot weather can drag you down. Rest in a cool, dry place as often as you can. Drink plenty of water.
- Avoid too much caffeine and alcohol.
- Don't use illegal drugs.
- Lighten your work load. Assign tasks to others when you can, both at work and at home. Ask for help when you need it from family and friends. Hire help if you need to.
- Change your routine. Try to do something new and that you want to do every day.
- If you do too much, make time for some peace and quiet.
- Do something for yourself. Plan time to do things that meet only your needs, not just those of others.
- Plan for some quiet time.