

Understanding Your Prostate Cancer-Related & Treatment-Related Symptoms: Fatigue

Recognizing Symptoms and Side Effects^{1,2}

It is important to recognize the symptoms of prostate cancer and the potential side effects of treatment so that your healthcare team can help you receive appropriate care.



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In their own words: How do patients with prostate cancer describe fatigue?³



Patient Perspective⁴
“I can’t walk far, I get tired with minimum effort, and the worst of all is that I can’t get myself out of the bed these days. The home provides me safety but at the same time isolates me from the rest of the world.”

Unwillingness
Exhaustion **Malaise**
Sleeplessness
Tiredness Lack of Concentration
Muscle Weakness Muscle Pain
Lack of Energy Weariness

What is fatigue?⁴⁻⁸



Fatigue is excessive tiredness and persistent lack of energy that may not get better after rest or sleep, and can occur with no obvious cause

Cancer-related fatigue is different from the fatigue that healthy people feel and can negatively impact quality of life

Fatigue can be:



Mental



Physical



Emotional



Fatigue is very common in patients with cancer and is the **most common side effect** of prostate cancer treatment

About **3 in 4** men with prostate cancer experience fatigue



Fatigue can be experienced at different levels and may or may not be relieved by rest

How can fatigue affect your daily life? Fatigue can make it hard to carry out your daily activities, such as⁸:



Getting dressed, taking a shower, or preparing food



Social activities, such as enjoying time with friends and family



Understanding new information and making decisions

Checklist: Am I experiencing fatigue?^{7,8}

Use this checklist to help identify whether you are experiencing fatigue.



Mental Fatigue

- I have been spending more time in bed and/or sleeping more ☐
- I am unable to sleep or my sleep is disturbed ☐
- I often become confused or can’t concentrate ☐
- I find it hard to think clearly or make decisions easily ☐



Physical Fatigue

- I feel very weak and have little or no energy ☐
- My arms and legs feel heavy and hard to move ☐
- I am more tired than usual during or after my usual activities ☐
- My tiredness makes it hard for me to do things I normally do ☐



Emotional Fatigue

- I feel irritable or frustrated ☐
- I lack interest or motivation in my daily life ☐
- I feel anxious, sad, or depressed ☐

Fatigue is a complex symptom that can be impacted by multiple factors^{8,9}:

Disease related

Direct result of prostate cancer or associated symptoms, such as pain, anemia, and depression



Treatment related

Treatments including medications or surgery to help treat your condition.



Age related

Chronic illnesses associated with age, such as diabetes and heart disease.



Additional factors^{6,10}



Sleep disorders



Treatments for other medical conditions



Nutrition problems



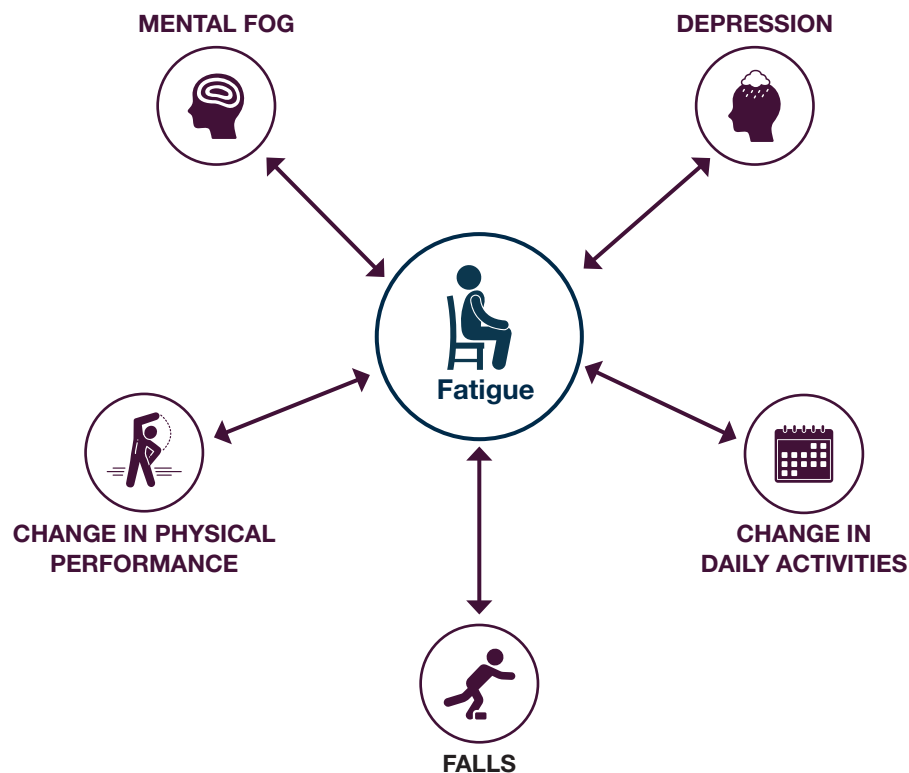
Psychological factors (pain, anxiety, depression)



Lack of physical activity and exercise



Symptoms that can be caused by fatigue can also make your fatigue worse^{7,8,11,12}:



Patient Perspective⁴

"Being unable to care for yourself is the first thing that comes to my mind. Prior to treatment and the onset of this symptom, I was able to care for myself without any problems or help from others. Now I find it extremely difficult and burdensome to do the same things of everyday life . . . imagine that even having a shower is an activity that causes me stress, as it means pushing my body to the limit in order to accomplish this . . . I never thought that it would have been an 'accomplishment' simply to have a shower."

How would you rate your fatigue?^{5,8,10,11}

Good communication with your healthcare team is key to successful evaluation and management of fatigue from your prostate cancer.

You can use the scale below to record how you feel and discuss the results with your healthcare team at each office visit to find the best management strategies for you.



How would you rate your fatigue?

NO FATIGUE

MILD

MODERATE

EXTREME

WORST

How tired did you feel during the past week?

NOT AT ALL

SLIGHTLY

MODERATELY

VERY

EXTREMELY

How often does fatigue prevent you from doing what you want to do?

NEVER

RARELY

SOMETIMES

OFTEN

ALWAYS

What can you do about your fatigue? Strategies to discuss with your healthcare team^{8,12}:



Complementary therapies
(yoga, acupuncture,
meditation, and massage)



Eat and drink well (dietary
or nutritional counseling)



Regular exercise
(eg, walking)



Try to be patient with yourself:
pace yourself, think about your
energy levels, and balance
activity and rest



Ask for help: talk to
family, friends, and your
healthcare team

Questions you can ask your healthcare team⁸:

- Can prostate cancer treatments cause fatigue?
- How long might my fatigue last?
- What can I do to improve or manage my fatigue?
- What physical activity is suitable for me?
- Is there a local support group for patients with prostate cancer-related fatigue?
- What other support is available to me?



Patient Perspective⁴

"Nothing is the same anymore, I lost my appetite to do anything nowadays, and how can you be happy if you cannot do the things that bring you pleasure at the time and place that you want? It feels like that I am living the life of others. . . . I get to do the things that others are in the mood for and what others decide on my behalf. I am sorry for myself because I do not see the 'living' in my life anymore."



Talk to your doctor or care team

If you are concerned about the possibility of developing fatigue, or if you have been feeling excessively tired, either physically or emotionally, let your doctor or care team know.

Resources to learn more

American Cancer Society. What Is Fatigue or Weakness?

<https://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/physical-side-effects/fatigue/what-is-cancer-related-fatigue.html>

Prostate Cancer UK. What Is Fatigue?

<https://prostatecanceruk.org/prostate-information-and-support/living-with-prostate-cancer/fatigue>

National Cancer Institute. Cancer Fatigue

<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/fatigue>



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