

Fatigue is a sense of tiredness that does not go away when you rest. You can feel it physically (not being able to carry the shopping or tiring when climbing stairs) or psychologically (feeling vague, not quite with it or not being able to concentrate). It is not a disease but a symptom and it is important to find out what is causing the fatigue and tiredness as there are many ways of eliminating its impact.

Indications that you have fatigue and tiredness include:

- Still being tired after rest
- Difficulty getting out of bed
- Reduction in physical ability
- Feeling vague
- Lack of concentration

Changes in the following mean you should consult your medical or health professional:

- Activity level
- When you are tired - like after climbing steps or waking up tired
- How you feel when you are tired - Are your muscles sore? Are you short of breath? Do you have difficulty concentrating? Have you lost interest in your daily activities?
- Your sleeping pattern - such as length of time (more or less), increase in getting up during the night, falling asleep, and staying asleep

The causes of fatigue and tiredness can be:

- Exposure to bacterial, parasitic and viral Infections (including the HIV virus itself)
- Onset of depression
- Imbalance of normal body hormones
- The use of certain antiretroviral drugs, and other pharmaceutical medications which can cause anaemia. Some of these are:
 - AZT (Retrovir, Combivir and Trizivir)

- abacavir (Ziagen and Trizivir)
- Sulpha antibiotics (Septrim, Bactrim)
- Some chemotherapy drugs
- Deficiency of iron, vitamin B6 and B12 which can also cause anaemia
- Poor quality nutrition (refer to Nutrition link)
- Lack of quality sleep (refer to Insomnia link)
- Lifestyle habits such as excessive drinking and recreational drug intake

To assist in the management of fatigue and tiredness try strategies such as:

- Going to bed at night and waking up in the morning at the same time. Changes in your routine can make you feel more tired
- Doing some exercise. Exercise helps with stress and tension giving you a more positive outlook and you will feel physically better for it too
- Having easy-to-prepare or pre-prepared foods in the pantry or freezer for times when you are too tired to cook
- Avoiding caffeinated drinks and too much sugar. They provide a 'false' boost of energy and are not good for long term health management
- Continuing to take your medications and seeking advice from your medical or health professional before you stop taking any medication. Fatigue will sometimes pass after the introductory period of a new medication
- Having blood tests to investigate levels of iron, vitamin B6 and B12

The information provided assists in self-management and is intended as recommendations only. For more information please see your medical or health professional.



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