



Fatigue

Fatigue is when you feel tired even after you rest. It can affect your body or how you feel. It grows slowly over time. People do not always notice it right away. People with both HIV and fatigue tend to get sicker than people with HIV alone.

Symptoms

When a person is tired, he or she:

- Lacks zeal or drive
- Sleeps poorly
- Cannot stay awake in the day
- Cannot focus
- Does not feel well or rested
- Loses interest in daily tasks or hobbies
- May have sore muscles
- May be short of breath

Fatigue

Many things can cause fatigue:

- HIV and other infections. Infections use a lot of energy. The body needs energy to fight HIV.
- Effects of HIV meds. The meds may change the way the body absorbs food.
- Anemia. Anemia makes the body work harder to get oxygen to the cells. Up to 80% of people with HIV have anemia.
- Depression
- Not enough sleep
- When you push the body to work harder than it can
- Too much coffee, tea or alcohol. These can make it hard for you to get enough sleep.

- Not enough exercise
- Low hormones
- Poor diet. A person could be too tired to shop or cook.
- If you smoke

How to Know You Have Fatigue

Blood tests can show some causes like anemia and infections. Other reasons are harder to find.

Fatigue

Fatigue needs to be dealt with since it can make HIV get worse quickly.

If a cause can be found, it should be treated. Infections can be treated with drugs. Anemia can be treated with more iron in your diet.

If HIV meds cause something that leads to fatigue, such as anemia from AZT, a doctor may change your treatment plan. A switch to a new med may make you feel less tired.

Some ways to reduce fatigue are:

- Eat well. A balanced diet with lots of fruit, vegetables and lean protein can give you more energy.
- Take vitamin pills to replace what may be lost from HIV meds.
- Get enough sleep
- Avoid a lot of caffeine or alcohol
- Stay active
- Get support for mental health issues or things that worry you. Talk to your friends, loved ones or doctor about where you could get help.

Prevention

Try to get enough sleep, exercise and eat a healthy diet to help prevent fatigue.

For more information

Contact your Registered Nurse Care Manager, or call PHP Nurse Advice Line at: (800) 797-1717.

