

Massachusetts General Hospital BMT Survivorship Program

Managing Fatigue

What is fatigue?

Fatigue is the feeling of tiredness, having no or low energy that lasts for a long time. Fatigue can make it hard to do your daily activities. You may feel fatigue after very little activity or even if you are getting enough sleep.

Most patients feel fatigue in the year after their BMT. Fatigue may last longer in some patients and can interfere with well-being and happiness.

You can manage your fatigue! **Talk to your treatment team if you are feeling fatigued.**

Tips for Managing Fatigue

It is important to treat physical symptoms that may be part of the reason you feel fatigued. Some symptoms that when treated may help with fatigue include: pain, neuropathy, trouble sleeping, anxiety, depression, not eating or drinking enough, diarrhea, or medication side effects. Certain blood tests may identify reasons for fatigue, and if treated may improve your symptoms.

You can also:

Start exercising

- If you are unsure how to start a safe exercise program, a Physical Therapist, or post cancer exercise program can help
- Exercise may not seem possible when you are feeling so tired, but over time it will improve your heart and lung capacity, muscle strength, balance, and energy
- Talk to your health care team about what is safe for you
- Start slow, and build in interval, frequency and intensity over weeks to months. Walking and stretching are great ways to start an exercise program. Keep a log of your regimen so you can see your progress over time

Take small steps to be more active every day

There are many ways to be more active; park your car in the farthest parking spot, take 1 flight of stairs rather than the elevator, or walk around the block. Figure out your high energy times and plan your exercise or important daily tasks then.

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Talk to our BMT social workers

- Ask yourself if your thoughts, feelings or behaviors are interfering with your daily function. If you feel negative, sad, or anxious it may be helpful to attend a free session with one of our BMT social workers
- Learn more about or take part in Cognitive Behavioral interventions (CBI). CBI can teach individuals better coping skills, how to reframe our negative thoughts, or use relaxation techniques

Improve your well-being through integrative therapies

Mind-Body Interventions such as gentle stretching, yoga, meditation, acupuncture (check if okay with BMT Team), dance, music therapy and art therapy have all been linked to helping patients feel less fatigue.

Take a new medication or change a current medication

There may be some prescriptions or adjustments of other medications that may help with fatigue.

Please talk to your BMT Care Team for further guidance as needed.

Mass General Resources

Physical Therapy

Available as one-time consult or recurring visit

617-726-2961

Lifestyle Medicine Clinic for Cancer Patients

Individualized exercise and lifestyle interventions to improve quality of life

617-724-4000

BMT Social Workers

617-726-5765