

# What To Do

## When You Feel Weak or Tired (Fatigue)



“I had no energy. I asked my doctor what I could do to stop feeling so tired and worn out. She told me that walking for even a short time every day could give me more energy. Now that’s a surprise. Being active does help me feel better.”

### Did you know that most people getting radiation therapy feel very tired?

- Fatigue does not mean that the cancer is getting worse.
- Fatigue does not mean that the treatment is not working.
- Feeling tired is normal during this time.

You may feel a little tired or very tired during radiation therapy.

### Try some of the tips below:

They have helped others. Talk with your doctor or nurse about other things you can do to have more energy.

#### Be active if you can.

Most people feel better when they exercise each day. Some people even sleep and eat better when they exercise.

- Walk for 15 to 30 minutes each day.
- Take a short bike ride or ride an exercise bike.
- Choose an exercise or sport that you enjoy.



## Managing Radiation Therapy Side Effects: What To Do When You Feel Weak or Tired (Fatigue)

### Do fewer things. Ask for help when you need it.

You may have times of high and low energy.

- Do the activities that are most important to you first.
- Ask family and friends for help. They can make meals, drive you to the doctor, or help in other ways.
- Learn your limits. Don't fill your day with too many activities.

### Plan a work schedule that is right for you.

Some people feel well enough to work. Others need to cut back.

- Take medical leave if you need to.
- Ask your boss if you can work from home.

### Plan time to rest.

Many people need more rest during radiation therapy.

- Sleep at least 8 hours each night.
- Take short naps during the day. Nap for less than 1 hour at a time.
- Read a book or listen to music to relax before going to bed at night.



## Talk with your doctor or nurse if you still feel tired after trying these tips.



### Questions to ask your doctor or nurse:

1. What can I do to feel less tired?
2. How long will this tired feeling last?
3. How much walking or light exercise should I do?
4. Is there medicine that could help?

### Free Services To Learn More

#### National Cancer Institute Cancer Information Service

Phone: 1-800-422-6237  
(1-800-4-CANCER)

TTY: 1-800-332-8615

Online: [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

Chat Online: [www.cancer.gov/help](http://www.cancer.gov/help)



NATIONAL  
CANCER  
INSTITUTE

NIH Publication No. 10-6108  
Reprinted April 2010

