Fatigue is one of the most common symptoms experienced by people with cancer. Cancer-related fatigue is described as a lasting tiredness that gets in the way of normal life activities. Fatigue may continue long after cancer treatment is completed. If you are experiencing fatigue, it is important to talk to your team so they can help you cope with it. This handout explains what causes fatigue, when to contact your care team and what you can do at home.

**What causes fatigue?**

There are several possible causes for fatigue, including:

- Cancer treatment or other medications
- Cancer itself
- Poor sleep habits

**When to contact your care team**

**Call 911 now** if you are a caregiver and you:

- Cannot wake the patient

Call your care team if you experience:

- Dizziness or confusion
- Difficulty catching your breath
- Too tired to get out of bed or walk to the bathroom
- Loss of balance
- Significant increase in fatigue
- Staying in bed all day
- Increased weakness
What you can do at home

• Exercise
  o The best way to lessen fatigue is exercise. Exercise moderately at least 3 times a week. Try to exercise for a total of 20-30 minutes. It doesn’t need to be done all at one time. Take a walk or do another activity you enjoy. Ask your care team what type of exercise is best for you.

• Create regular rest and sleep routines:
  o Set up a regular daily schedule for sleep and wake times.
  o Avoid long naps during the day. Limit naps to 1-2 hours.
  o Play soft music, read, or engage in meditation or prayer.
  o Avoid watching TV or using your cell phone before bedtime.
  o Ask your care team for the Healthy Sleep Habits handout for more tips on healthy sleep routines.

• Keep a diary to monitor your fatigue levels. Take note of what you think may be causing increased fatigue.

• Conserve energy:
  o Engage in light activity, like taking a walk, each day. Avoid overexerting yourself.
  o Take rest breaks throughout the day.
  o Plan activities, such as exercise, visits, or trips when you are feeling the most rested and energetic.

• Organize work centers so that equipment is within easy reach.

• Delegate as much as possible. It helps you get tasks done and it makes those who want to help feel useful.

• Arrange your household so that most activities can be done on one floor.

• Plan activities that allow you to sit or lie down.

• Wear a hip sack, carpenter’s belt, or jacket or sweater with pockets to carry things.