

# LIVING HEALTHY AS A CANCER SURVIVOR: FATIGUE

A cancer survivor is a person who has been diagnosed with cancer. They are considered a survivor for the rest of their life.

- There are both physical and emotional side effects of cancer and its treatment. These side effects will impact survivors in different ways.
- Choosing healthy behaviors is important. You can lower your risk of getting cancer again through exercise, eating healthy foods and not being overweight.
- This document provides survivors with information on ways to live healthy after treatment ends. The document should not replace consultation with a health care provider. It is important that all survivors see their health care provider for regular medical care.

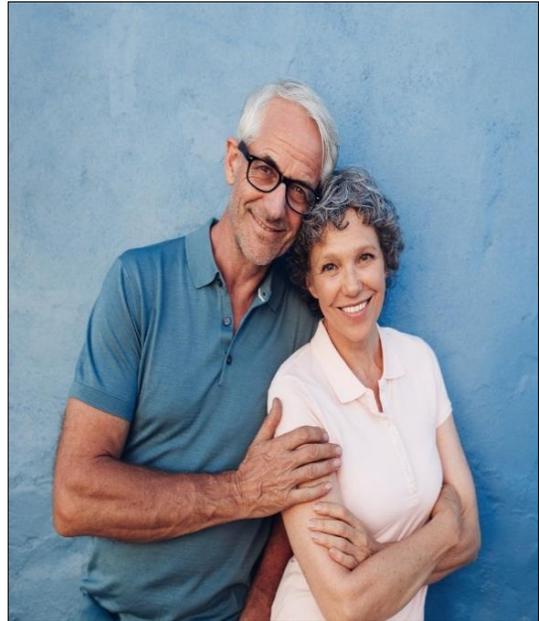
## Handling Fatigue as a Cancer Survivor

Fatigue is a common side effect of cancer treatment. Cancer related fatigue is not linked to recent activity. It does not always get better if you rest.

**Physical fatigue**- The body feels tired and a person may not feel they have energy to do activities.

**Mental fatigue**- A person has difficulty concentrating, solving problems, reading, and holding conversations. They may also experience anxiety and irritability.

**Cancer treatment, pain, and other factors can cause fatigue. Talk to your health care provider about different ways to treat it.**



## Managing Your Fatigue

1. Be active. Being physically active can help you gain energy and lower stress.
  - American Cancer Society guidelines for physical activity include 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week, like fast walking.
  - Exercise using a DVD or YouTube video if it is hard to leave the house.
  - Consider yoga, biking, or other types of exercises.
  - Ask your health care provider and physical therapist about activities that are best for you.
  - Physical activity is the **BEST** way to decrease fatigue and increase energy.
  - For some individuals, it may take time to overcome fatigue.

2. Eat healthy. Drink Lots of water.

- Eat 2 cups of vegetables and 1 ½ cups of fruit every day.
- Try eating 5 or 6 small meals spaced out over the day, instead of 3 large meals.
- If you drink coffee or tea with caffeine, only drink them in the morning.
- Drink at least 8 to 10 glasses (8 ounce) of water each day. Check with your health care provider if you have heart or kidney problems.

3. Create time during your day to rest.

- Go to bed at the same time every night, even on the weekends.
- Relax before going to bed by reading or listening to quiet music.
- Get up at about the same time every morning.
- It is ok to take 1 or 2 short, 30-minute naps during the day. Try to be active after.



4. Distract yourself with fun activities.

- Volunteer in your community.
- Take time to visit with family and friends.
- Read a book, meditate, listen to music or enjoy a hobby.

## Helpful Resources for Survivors

- Call The American Cancer Society's National Cancer Information Center at 1-800-227-2345 for more information and resources.
- For more information on cancer related fatigue visit the [National Cancer Institute website](https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/fatigue/fatigue-pdq): <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/fatigue/fatigue-pdq>



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2. National Cancer Institute (2015). Fatigue (PDQ®) – Patient Version. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/fatigue/fatigue-pdq>