



Post-Stroke Fatigue

Characteristics of Post-Stroke Fatigue:

- Intense tiredness that isn't related to how active you've been
- Tiredness doesn't improve with rest
- Lack of energy to perform your usual tasks or activities
- Abnormal need for naps or prolonged sleep
- Feeling more tired after activities than before your stroke
- Can happen at any point in your recovery. You may recover or it can become persistent up to 3 years or more

You may experience fatigue in different ways:

- Physical Fatigue: feeling low energy or unusually tired after being active
- Cognitive Fatigue: feeling unusually tired after activities that require attention or multi-tasking. Can also make it difficult to concentrate and can affect your memory.
- Emotional Fatigue: feeling unusually tired after activities that are emotionally demanding. It can be difficult to regulate emotions (e.g. feeling sad, irritable or anxious).

What can you do to help post-stroke fatigue?

- Eat a healthy diet and drink enough water
- Practice good sleep habits (e.g. adequate sleep, regular sleep schedule)
- Be active. Even small increases in physical activity have benefits
- Determine which activities contribute to your fatigue
- Use the 4 P's to conserve energy (see below)
- Talk to your healthcare provider to see what treatment options are available. Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists can help you develop strategies to manage your fatigue. Some individuals find cognitive behavioural therapy helpful.

Remember the 4 P's to Conserve Energy

- Prioritize: do what needs to be done and don't spend energy on unnecessary activities. Complete your most important tasks first.
- Plan: make a schedule of activities for the day or week and spread out the most energy demanding tasks to avoid fatigue. Do activities at a time of day when you have the most energy. Give yourself extra time to do a task.
- Pacing: strike a balance between activity and rest. Try to rest before a demanding activity or take breaks during it. It may take longer to complete tasks than it did prior to your stroke. Don't do too much on days you are feeling energized, as you may feel exhausted for 1-2 days afterwards
- Positioning: sit during an activity if possible. Consider using an assistive device. Have necessary items for a task close by.