

Fatigue: feeling very tired

What is fatigue?

Fatigue is hard to describe because it affects people in different ways. Some people call it feeling tired, worn out or drained. Others call it a lack of energy. Often, no one can tell how tired you are.

What causes it?

Fatigue can be caused by many things.

- Common illness from viruses or bacteria like the flu or strep throat.
- A chronic illness such as cancer, anemia, depression or low thyroid.
- Not sleeping enough or irregular sleeping patterns.
- Poor eating habits. Not eating the right foods or eating too many junk foods.
- School with or without after school activities.
- Work.
- Medicines like some antihistamines or antidepressants.

How does fatigue affect me?

- You may sleep more and have a hard time getting up in the morning.
- You may not want to do your normal activities.
- You may be tired during class. This can affect your grades at school.
- You may be crabby and not as patient.
- Some people feel sad or down when they are tired.

How is it diagnosed?

Talk to your provider. Tell the doctor how you feel or what things are hard for you to do. Your parents may know when you are tired and can give examples too.

Your provider will do an exam. Your height and weight will be checked. Your doctor will ask questions about your sleep, eating, activities and feelings. Blood tests may be done to check for infections, like mononucleosis or other illnesses such as low thyroid and anemia. Other tests may also be ordered by the provider.

How is it treated?

Treatment is based on the cause of your fatigue. The provider will go over any test results or changes on your exam.

- Your diet or sleeping patterns may need to be changed.
- You may need to get more rest and have a regular sleep routine



Treatment continued

- You may need to cut back on some activities. You may need to limit TV, cell phone, social media use and video game use before bedtime.
- Changing the time that medicines are taken can also be helpful. Medicines that tend to make you sleepy are best to take at night.

Other helpful resources:

Check these websites and search under fatigue:

- www.emedicinehealth.com
- www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.