

## ONCOLOGY

## After Chemotherapy Care Instructions

## Fatigue

*What is fatigue?*

Fatigue is the decrease of physical and emotional energy that gets in the way of regular daily activities, such as sleep and overall general well-being. Fatigue is the most common side effect of chemotherapy. It comes in cycles following a round of chemotherapy treatments. Fatigue caused by chemotherapy is most intense during the first 48–72 hours and peaks again 7 to 10 days later. You may feel that it gets harder and harder to recover as your treatment continues. The combination of radiation or other medical conditions may make fatigue last longer.

*What can I do at home to care for myself?*

- Conserve your energy.
  - Limit your daily activities. Do what is most important to you.
  - Get plenty of rest and take naps during the day if you can. Maintain a regular bedtime at night and time to get up in the morning.
  - Gather commonly used items in one location near your bed or chair.
  - Mark on your calendar “feel good” days and “feel bad” days. Plan your social and important events on “feel good” days. Stay at home and limit your number of visitors on the “feel bad” days.
  - Note the time of the day that you feel better and the time you feel tired. Get things done during the hours when you feel better. Ask for help during the low energy time.
  - Keep doing activities you enjoy, but choose easy ones that take less time.
  
- Exercise.
  - Do light exercises. Take short walks whenever possible.
  - Plan things to do to reduce your stress, such as listening to music to make you relax when you feel tired.

*(over)*

*continued*

***When should I call  
my physician?***

- Get good nutrition.
  - Maintain balanced nutrition.
  - Eat frequent soft small meals.
  - Maintain the amount of water and fruit juices you drink.
  - Avoid caffeine and alcohol.
  
- When you have changes in your energy level.
- Shortness of breath or chest pain.
- Dizziness when you get up.
- Extreme tiredness.

If you cannot reach your health care team or your symptoms get worse, go to Urgent Care or the Emergency Department.