Fatigue

What is fatigue?

Fatigue is a condition of tiredness or weakness that is physical or mental, or both. It can happen for many reasons, but it is especially likely in situations of excessive physical or mental stress. It is usually a normal response to overexertion. On the other hand, a medical problem called chronic fatigue syndrome is repeated episodes of long-term fatigue usually without any obvious cause.

How does it occur?

Fatigue may be caused by:

- an illness
- overexertion
- poor physical condition
- lack of exercise
- inadequate sleep
- overweight
- poor diet
- stress
- emotional or psychological problems
- some medicines.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include:

- weakness
- tiredness
- indifference
- lack of energy.

How is it diagnosed?

Your health care provider will review your symptoms and ask about your daily routine, work habits, and environment. Your provider will give examine you. You may have blood tests to rule out diseases that can cause fatigue, such as diabetes, hypothyroidism, heart disease, lung disease, and anemia.

If you have a history of emotional stress or recurrent anxiety or depression, your health care provider may diagnose fatigue caused by psychological problems.

How is it treated?

The treatment depends on the cause. If fatigue is a symptom of another condition or illness, that condition or disease will be the focus of treatment. If the cause is emotional or psychological, your health care provider may refer you to a therapist for counseling.

How long do the effects last?

The effects will last as long as the cause of the symptoms exists.

How can I take care of myself?

- Get enough rest and sleep.
- Eat a healthy diet. If you are overweight, begin a weight loss program after checking with your health care provider.
- Walk or exercise according to your health care provider's recommendations.
- See a counselor if you are having emotional problems.
- Learn to use deep breathing techniques, visualization, and meditation to relieve stress.
- Allow yourself time to relax and do things you enjoy.
- Meet new people and develop new interests.

How can I prevent fatigue?

- If you are working longer hours or doing more physical work, allow yourself more time to sleep or rest.
- If your work activity has become more strenuous, take breaks during the day to sit and rest.
- Eat more nutritious food when you are working or exercising more strenuously.
- Ask your provider about taking vitamin and mineral supplements.
- Consider eating smaller meals 6 times a day to maintain a higher energy level. Eat more complex carbohydrates such as rice and pasta, and eat less fat. Avoid foods that contain a lot of sugar. Avoid overeating.
- Stop smoking.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol. and other drugs.