Feeling Tired After a Stroke

You will likely feel tired after a stroke. This feeling is called fatigue. It can be overwhelming. It is not something that you can fight through. Most often, you will need more rest during the day. Fatigue may last for many months after your stroke.

You may have less energy than before. Your stroke and its effects can change your sleeping habits, eating habits, and your activity level. The fatigue may affect your quality of life and relationships. Family and friends may not understand how tiring the fatigue can be.

You may have as much energy as before, but it is being used in a different way. Due to your stroke, many things like dressing, talking, or walking take a lot more effort. Changes in thinking and memory take effort. This takes energy.

You may notice emotional changes. Coping with frustration, anxiety, anger, and sadness can be draining. Depressed feelings are common after a stroke. Loss of energy, interest, or enthusiasm occurs with a depressed mood. After a stroke, many people have depression which can be treated with counseling or medicines. Talk to your doctor if you are depressed or if your fatigue goes past three months.

How to Increase Your Energy

- **Give yourself time.** Being tired after a stroke is common. It is not your fault. The more you push yourself the worse you will feel. Knowing fatigue takes time to improve will help you cope better.
- **Tell your doctor about your fatigue.** Make sure you have had a recent physical. Other reasons for feeling tired should be ruled out. Your doctor can check to see if your fatigue could be a side effect of your medicines.
- **Celebrate your successes!** Look at your progress, not at what is left to be done. Keep a diary of all that you get done each day.
- **Listen to your body.** Try naps or schedule rest times throughout the day. Rest as long as you need, to feel refreshed.
- **Learn to relax.** Sometimes the harder you try to do something, the harder it is to do. You become tense, anxious, and frustrated. All this takes more energy. If you can relax, you will waste less energy.
- **Each day do something you enjoy.** A positive outlook and having other good things going on helps to boost energy levels.
- **Regular exercise may help.** Start gently. Try a short walk or a few minutes on an exercise bike.
- **Seek support.** Contact the clinic to find out about support group options.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 2/2025. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#6304