

Self Test

If you think you may be suffering from fatigue, this Self-Test can help you discuss your concerns with your healthcare provider. Your answers can help your qualified healthcare professional to determine if you have fatigue.

How many days a month do you experience the following?:

	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
How often do you experience fatigue or tiredness despite adequate rest and not working overly hard?				
How often does tiredness impair normal functioning?				
How often do you experience impaired memory or concentration?				
How often do you have muscle pain?				
How often do you experience pain in the glands of your neck or under arms?				
How often do you feel weak?				
How often do you get headaches?				
How often do you have unrefreshing sleep?				
How often do you feel unhappy?				

If you checked off any problems, how difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?

Not difficult at all _____ Somewhat difficult _____ Very difficult _____ Extremely difficult _____

If you checked one or more of the shaded boxes it might be worthwhile to discuss your answers with your healthcare provider.

Take The First Step Today

If you are struggling with fatigue, ask your healthcare provider about all of your treatment options. This could be your first step toward a happier and healthier tomorrow.



Fatigue

What is the connection between fatigue and your nervous system?



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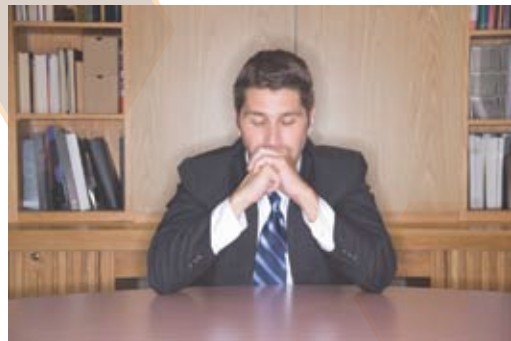
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Recognizing Signs of Fatigue

In general, everyone experiences times of drowsiness or lack of energy and motivation. Fatigue can result from emotional or physical stress, lack of sleep, bad nutrition, infection, or other physical and psychological causes. Most individuals with fatigue don't suffer from extreme or persistent symptoms. It generally goes away after getting adequate rest or recovering from an illness. For some, however, fatigue symptoms persist throughout their entire day regardless of the amount of sleep obtained. There is often an underlying chemical imbalance in one or many of the body's chemical messenger systems.

Fatigue can also greatly affect normal cognitive function. In particular, symptoms manifest such as concentration and focus difficulties, and impaired memory. Other common symptoms are malaise, unrefreshing sleep, muscle pain, headaches, sore throat, and tender lymph nodes.



Facts about Fatigue

Many Americans suffer from fatigue at one point in their lives. If fatigue persists for six months or more it could be a sign of a more serious condition called Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS). CFS is characterized by long-term fatigue leading to more serious impairment in concentration, focus, memory, and may also exist with muscle pain and headaches.

- Research has shown that CFS patients often produce lower levels of cortisol compared to healthy controls. Laboratory studies have suggested that this is due to impairment of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis*.
- Nutritional deficiency may be another contributing factor to fatigue symptoms; however, more evidence is needed to determine what nutritional defects can lead to fatigue*.
- CFS occurs four times more frequently in women than in men, yet either gender can develop the disease*.
- Of the four million Americans who have CFS, less than 20% have been diagnosed due to the lack of sufficient diagnostic laboratory tests or biomarkers*.

*Data adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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Fatigue & Neurotransmitter Levels

Fatigue is often a result of impairment in the nervous system. Particularly, imbalances in hormones as well as brain chemicals called neurotransmitters, can be an underlying component to the development of fatigue.

Neurotransmitters are chemicals that relay signals between nerve cells, called "neurons." They are present throughout the body and are required for proper brain and body functions. Serious health problems, including fatigue, can occur when neurotransmitter levels are too high or too low.

Every neurotransmitter behaves differently. Some neurotransmitters are inhibitory and tend to calm, while others are excitatory and stimulate the brain. Healthcare professionals conclude that specific neurotransmitter imbalances are more likely to underlie certain conditions. Deficiencies involving the central nervous system's neurotransmitters-epinephrine and norepinephrine- appear to be involved in the development of fatigue symptoms. Disruptions in the stress hormone cortisol have been more closely linked to fatigue symptoms.

Environmental and biological factors—including stress, poor diet, neurotoxins, or genetics— can cause imbalances in the levels of neurotransmitter chemicals in the brain. These imbalances can trigger or exacerbate fatigue symptoms.

Improving Treatment

Most of the pharmaceutical medications used to treat fatigue and CFS actually focus on other symptoms. For instance, many address sleeping difficulties, cognitive problems, pain and additional symptoms that correspond with CFS. These medications are primarily supporting neurotransmitters like serotonin, norepinephrine, and GABA.

Neurotransmitter function can also be supported with nutrient-based programs. Neurotransmitters are made from various components found in food of a normal, healthy diet. Increasing the amounts of these dietary constituents can help maintain normal neurotransmitter levels.

While no program can guarantee success for everyone, it is worthwhile to effectively match a drug-based and/or nutrient-based program to the specific needs of the individual.

