

疲憊（疲勞）與癌症

本資訊主要介紹疲勞。疲勞意味著感覺很累，且可能由癌症本身或癌症治療所引起。

所有帶下劃線的辭彙在本文最後所附的辭彙表中均有說明。辭彙表中亦包括了英語單詞的發音。

若您對本資訊有任何疑問，您可以詢問您正在其中接受治療的醫院的醫生及護士。

週一至週五上午 9 時至晚上 8 時，您可以致電麥克米倫癌症援助機構（Macmillan Cancer Support）免費熱線：**0808 808 00 00**。我們有口譯員，所以您可以使用您的語言與我們溝通。當您致電我們時，請以英文告訴我們您所需要的語言（說「釵尼斯」）。

欲參閱更多繁體中文癌症資訊，請瀏覽 macmillan.org.uk/translations

本資訊主要介紹：

- 甚麼是疲勞？
- 導致疲勞的原因是甚麼？
- 應對疲勞的方法
- 在工作中應對疲勞
- 照顧疲勞的人
- 麥克米倫（Macmillan）如何給予幫助
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甚麼是疲勞？

疲勞是您在大多數時候或整天都感到很累，這是一種癌症患者常見的問題。

癌症引起的疲勞不同於非癌症導致的疲勞。癌症患者在活動後不僅更容易疲勞，而且休息或睡眠皆無法緩解疲勞。

對於大多數人來說，治療結束後疲勞情形會改善。但對於一些人，也有可能維持幾個月，甚至是幾年的時間。狀況因人而異，我們無法確切知道每個人的疲勞持續時間。

疲勞會以不同的方式影響您，其中一些常見的影響為：

- 日常活動困難，如梳頭髮或穿衣
- 感覺缺乏活力或力氣
- 難以集中注意力及記住事情
- 難以思考、說話或做決定
- 輕微活動後感覺呼吸困難
- 感覺眩暈或頭暈
- 睡眠困難（失眠）
- 失去性慾
- 感覺比平常多愁善感

當您在大多時間都感到疲倦，您會覺得沮喪和壓抑。將您的感受告訴醫生和護士非常重要，他們可能會有辦法幫助您。另外，您也可以做一些對自己有助的事情，例如，多活動身體有助於緩解疲勞。

導致疲勞的原因是甚麼？

可能導致疲勞的原因：

- 癌症
- 癌症治療
- 貧血
- 飲食問題
- 其他健康問題
- 癌症的心理影響

癌症

- 對於一些人，癌症本身會導致疲勞。
- 這可能是因為癌症的症狀。例如，您身體某些部位可能因癌症導致液體積聚而腫脹。這會使身體感覺沉重，難以四處走動。
- 您可能會感到疲倦，因為癌症減少了紅血球數量。紅血球數量減少稱為貧血。
- 導致荷爾蒙水平變化的癌症（例如：乳癌或前列腺癌）也會引起疲勞。

癌症治療

- 如果疲勞是由癌症治療所引起，治療結束後通常會有好轉。但對於一些人，也有可能維持幾個月，甚至是幾年的時間。
- 手術 - 手術後的疲勞程度取決於手術類型，不過通常都是暫時性的。
- 化療和放療 - 治療結束後，疲勞狀況通常會在 6 至 12 個月內改善，但也可能持續更長的時間。有時候這些治療可能會導致長期的影響，例如：呼吸困難或心臟問題。這些問題可能會令您更加疲勞。化療及放療可能也會引起貧血。
- 荷爾蒙治療和靶向療法 - 接受這些治療期間也可能會讓您感到疲勞。

欲查閱更多關於手術、化療、放療和癌症治療副作用的其他語言資訊，請瀏覽 macmillan.org.uk/translations 或致電 0808 808 00 00。

貧血

造成貧血的原因是由於血液中沒有足夠的血紅素（Hb）。血紅素存在於紅血球中，負責將氧氣輸送到全身，為我們提供能量。如果您患有貧血，您可能會感到

- 疲勞
- 呼吸困難
- 暈眩及頭暈

貧血可能由化療或放療引起。您的醫生可以檢查您是否患有貧血。如果您患有貧血，您可能需要接受治療，讓您感覺更好。

飲食問題

如果您攝取的食物量少於平常，您可能會較沒精神並感到疲倦。如果您有飲食問題，請務必告知您的護士或醫生。

如果您感到噁心而無法進食，請告訴您的醫生。他們也許能夠透過開藥為您提供幫助。如果您不能服用抗噁心藥物，或因嘔吐而無法服藥，請諮詢您的醫生或護士。仍有其他方法可以服用抗噁心藥物。

我們有繁體中文版的《飲食問題與癌症》資訊單，為您提供更多資訊。請瀏覽 macmillan.org.uk/translations 或致電 0808 808 00 00。

疼痛

如果您感到疼痛，也可能會導致疲勞。止痛藥和其他治療方法有助於緩解疼痛。如果您的疼痛得以減輕，那麼疲勞也會得到緩解。

其他醫療問題

糖尿病、心臟病或甲狀腺問題也有可能讓您更加疲勞。有時，如果您正在服用其他藥物治療其他疾病，也可能會讓您感到疲勞。

失去肌肉力量

如果您感到疲勞，您的活動量可能會逐漸減少。肌肉若不經常使用，就會變得越來越弱。肌肉變弱代表就算簡單的事情，您做起來也會覺得困難和累人。這也代表您可能更容易摔倒。

從事體能活動是保持肌力和提振精神的最佳方式。

癌症對情感的影響

癌症引起的情緒影響也會造成疲勞。癌症引起的情緒因人而異，您可能會感到擔憂、沮喪或生氣，感覺並沒有對錯之分。有時候，情緒低落也會讓您難以入睡。然而缺乏睡眠會讓您更加疲勞。

有些方式可能有助於改善情緒，包括與人交談或輔助療法。

應對疲勞的方法

您的醫療小組可以提供的協助

請務必向醫療小組描述您的疲勞情況。應對方式有很多種。

您的醫生會尋找導致您疲勞的原因並給予適當的治療，例如：貧血。他們會為您進行檢查，且可能需要驗血。他們也會查看您正在服用的藥物，這是為了看能否改變藥物以改善疲勞。例如，他們可能會減少讓您昏昏欲睡的藥物劑量。

治療疲勞藥物

目前尚無藥物可以預防或改善疲勞。類固醇雖用於治療其他健康問題，但有時候會有所幫助。不過可能會產生副作用，因此您應與您的醫生討論可能的好處與壞處。

為了找尋更好的全新療法，一些研究試驗已經在進行中，其中也包含治療疲勞的藥物。現在很多醫院都參與了這樣的試驗。您可與您的醫生討論，以了解您是否可以參加疲勞治療的研究試驗。

獲得支援

如果您覺得難以應對疲勞，向醫生或護士解釋任何問題可能會有所幫助。

告訴他們您難以應對的活動，這些活動可能是爬樓梯、煮飯或洗澡等，讓他們知道哪些事情會讓疲勞情況好轉或更糟。您可以試著寫關於疲勞的日記。例如，記下一天中比較疲勞的時段，或幫助您感覺更好的事物。您可以將日記給您的醫生或護士看。

您可以向他們詢問以下問題：

- 哪些原因有可能導致我疲勞？
- 有沒有緩解疲勞的治療方式？
- 我能做甚麼來緩解我的疲勞？
- 我的藥物會影響我的精力嗎？
- 您可以提供哪些幫助？

您可以做的事情

您可以採取不同的措施來應對疲勞，以下一些方法可能可以緩解您的疲勞。其他人可能可以幫助您更好地應對疲勞。

提前計畫

如果您有疲勞問題，提前計畫非常重要。這有助於確保您可以繼續做您最喜歡做的事情。

- 使用日記幫助記錄您何時感覺最好、何時感覺最累。
- 您感覺不那麼累的時候，試著為自己安排更重大的任務。
- 活動結束後，儘量安排足夠的休息時間。

確保您照顧自己的需要並得到足夠的休息，即便您也需要照顧他人的需要。

飲食

- 健康飲食有助於您增加能量。如果您食慾不振或有其他飲食問題，您可以諮詢醫院的營養師，他們會建議您吃甚麼最好。
- 您食慾很好時，記得充分利用這時候確保自己吃得好。儘量多喝水。
- 每天記錄您所吃的食物和時間。如此一來，您就可以看出攝取哪些食物讓您更有精神。其他人為您準備食物有助於您解決飲食問題，或者您可以購買即食食品或訂購外送餐點。

我們有繁體中文版的《**健康飲食**》資訊單，為您提供更多資訊。請瀏覽 macmillan.org.uk/translations 或致電 **0808 808 00 00**。

體能活動

體能活動有助於緩解疲勞。運動有助於

- 促進食慾
- 提振精神
- 強健肌力
- 改善睡眠

在治療期間或之後開始一些體能活動通常是安全的。如果您決定進行一些體能活動，請務必確保安全地進行。恢復期間，您可以試著從坐在椅子上，而非躺在床上開始，再逐漸試著在住家周圍進行短距離散步。即使您在罹患癌症前有規律運動的習慣，您仍需要更加小心。

您可以透過很多種方式增加體能活動，包括：

- 多從事居家活動，例如：做家事或園藝
- 走路或騎腳踏車前往工作、商店或找朋友
- 伸展運動，例如：瑜珈或太極

如果您感覺不適、呼吸困難或疼痛，請勿運動。感到不適時要告訴您的醫生。

開始任何體能活動或增加運動量前，請務必向專業醫療人員尋求建議。您的癌症專家或全科醫生可以將您轉介至物理治療師。他們可以幫助您增加體能及肌力。

睡眠

疲勞會讓您一直想睡覺，但是保持規律的睡眠作息是非常重要的。大多數人會試著每晚睡 6 至 8 小時。良好的睡眠品質有助於緩解疲勞，也可以減少您白天睡覺的需要。

一覺好眠的秘訣：

- 每天同一時間起床和睡覺
- 失眠隔天不要太晚起床，這可能會擾亂您的睡眠作息。
- 試著輕度運動，例如：走路。這可以自然地幫助您感到疲倦並準備好入眠。
- 透過一些活動讓自己忙碌，例如：閱讀、玩遊戲或拼圖，這也可以自然地幫助您入睡。
- 觀察小睡片刻會如何影響您，有些人發現白天睡午覺可以幫助他們在夜晚睡得更好，但有些人則睡更不好。
- 類固醇可能會導致睡眠問題。如果您正在服用類固醇，您可以詢問醫生是否可以將服藥時間提前。

情感支持

心理諮商

疲勞會影響您的情緒，讓您感到更焦慮或心情低落。如果您有情緒上的困難，您可能會覺得心理諮商很有幫助。心理諮商師在傾聽方面訓練有素，他們可以協助您應對低落的情緒。

很多醫院備有心理諮商師或經專門培訓的人員，為受到癌症影響的人提供情感支持。您的癌症醫生或專科護士可以告訴您醫院提供哪些服務。他們也可以為您轉介至其他服務。有些全科醫生診所也備有心理諮商師，或可以為您轉介至其他心理諮商師。

援助小組

有些人覺得與其他疲勞症患者交談會有所幫助。英國大部份地區都有援助小組，他們有時由專業醫療人員領導，而小組其他成員的處境也可能與您相似。

您可以致電麥克米倫（Macmillan）援助熱線 0808 808 00 00，尋求您所在地區的援助小組支援。我們可以試着尋找是否有與您說著同樣語言的援助小組。

輔助療法

輔助療法是讓您感覺較舒服的療法或活動。這些療法無法治癒癌症。緩解疲勞的輔助療法有不同方式，例如：

- 放鬆
- 按摩療法
- 瑜珈

NHS 提供上述一些療法，您的全科醫生可以為您提供更多資訊。您也可以透過癌症援助小組獲得資訊。

為安全起見，請務必查看治療師的證照和精經驗。如果您需要這方面的協助，請諮詢您的醫生或護士，或撥打麥克米倫（Macmillan）援助熱線 0808 808 0000。

在使用輔助療法前，請諮詢您的專科醫生或護士。一些療法可能會影響您的癌症治療。

管理日常活動的小秘訣

如果您需要協助打理家務，您可以尋求家人、朋友或鄰居幫忙。建立支援網絡可以為您帶來很大幫助。如果您表面上看似沒問題，您的家人和朋友可能不會意識到您需幫助，他們或者是在等您開口尋求協助。

有些事情可以幫助您完成日常事項。

打理家務

- 分散整週任務。每天做一點，而不是一次做很多。
- 如果可以，請別人做比較費力的工作（例如：園藝）。
- 如果可以，坐下來進行一些家務。
- 如果可以，雇用清潔人員來協助，但費用可能很貴。您或許可以從社會服務獲得家庭協助。

購物

- 如果可以，請朋友或家人陪同您一起去購物，以提供協助。
- 大多數的大型超市提供網路購物宅配到府服務。
- 使用購物車，您就不需要手提很重的籃子。拖輪購物袋對於購物和將採購品帶回家都很方便。
- 在非繁忙時間購物。
- 請店員協助裝袋並將和雜貨送到車上。

準備餐點

- 很累的時候，您可以嘗試即食餐點或預煮食品。
- 如果可以，坐下來準備餐點。
- 感覺不太累時，額外準備一份餐點或準備雙份餐點，將其冷凍以備您需要時食用。

洗澡和穿衣

- 如果可以，盡量坐在浴缸裡而非站著淋浴，這樣可以比較省力。
- 如果可以，坐下來淋浴，以避免久站。職能治療師也許可以為您提供淋浴座椅。

職能治療師

職能治療師負責協助難以走動或進行日常事項（如穿衣、洗衣和煮飯）的人士。他們也許可以到府拜訪您，協助您找到更容易做事的方法。您的癌症專家、專科護士或全科醫生可以將您轉介至職能治療師。。

育兒

您應對疲勞時，可能難以照顧您的家庭。如果您無法進行日常的家庭活動，可能會令您心煩意亂。您可以透過以下方式讓育兒更容易：

- 向您的孩子解釋您經常感到疲倦，且無法像以前一樣陪他們做那麼多事情。
- 與您的孩子策劃可以坐著進行的活動，例如：玩桌遊或拼圖。
- 試著計劃在孩子玩樂時有地方讓您坐下來的活動。
- 避免抱著小孩，盡量使用嬰兒車或推車。
- 試著讓您的孩子融入一些家務事。
- 向親朋好友尋求協助並欣然接受他們的幫助。

駕車

如果您感到非常疲累，開車可能會很困難，也很危險。您的警覺性可能比平常差，也不太能集中注意力。您的反應時間也會有所差別。以下提示可能對您有所幫助：

- 如果您覺得很累，請勿駕車。
- 如果可以，請家人或朋友開車載您。
- 如果您需要前往醫院看診，請詢問您的醫生的護士，醫院是否有提供交通，讓您免於自行開車前往。
- 如果您開車時想睡覺，請在安全的地方停下來休息一下。

在工作中應對疲勞

您可能會發現疲勞會影響您的工作方式。

癌症患者受《2010 平等法案》保護。這代表雇主不得不公正地對待癌症患者，也代表雇主應在工作上做出合理的調整以支援癌症患者。

您可以與您的雇主討論：

- 改變您的工作時間，或減少工作
- 改變您上下班時間，方便您非尖峰時段上下班
- 請同事分攤您的一些工作
- 提供鄰近工作地點的停車位
- 於特定時間在家工作
- 若您的工作涉及勞力或費力工作時，為您更換較輕鬆的工作。

向同事解釋疲勞的影響也可以幫助您應對工作中的疲勞。有些人可能很難理解您有多累，尤其如果您看起來無恙。

如果您是自僱人士，您可與「勞工與退休金部」討論您可能有的福利。我們有繁體中文版的《經濟援助－福利救濟金》資訊單，為您提供更多資訊。請瀏覽 macmillan.org.uk/translations 或致電 0808 808 00 00。

照顧疲勞的人

許多人為疲勞的家人、伴侶、朋友或鄰居提供支援。照顧疲勞的人意味著許多事情，例如：協助個人護理、提供交通或安排看診。

如果您在照顧疲勞的人，有許多事情可以對您有所幫助：

- 明白疲勞對您們兩位來說都是不容易的。
- 協助記錄當事者的疲勞日記。例如，記下一天中比較疲勞的時段，或幫助他們感覺更好的事物。這將有助於您及疲勞的人了解哪些時段比較有精神或沒有精神。
- 試著幫助您照顧的人多運動或改變他們的飲食習慣。

您也可以陪同您照顧的人一起去醫院看診。您可以幫助他們向醫療團隊解釋疲勞對您們兩位的影響。您可以給他們看他的疲勞日記，並尋求他們的建議，了解您還能如何提供協助。

照顧自己

照顧別人時，照顧自己也很重要。確保您有定期進行身體檢查。這包括您需要的任何疫苗接種，例如：流感疫苗。如果您平常有在服用藥物，請務必備足藥物。

如果可以，盡量試著：

- 休息片刻
- 健康飲食
- 適度運動
- 充足睡眠
- 為自己尋求支持—也許與援助小組中照顧他人的組員交談。

您可以致電麥克米倫（Macmillan）援助熱線 0808 808 00 00，尋求您所在地區的援助小組支援。我們可以試着尋找是否有與您說著同樣語言的援助小組。

麥克米倫（Macmillan）如何給予幫助

麥克米倫（Macmillan）致力於幫助您和您的家人。您可透過下列方式獲得援助：

- **麥克米倫（Macmillan）援助熱線 (0808 808 00 00)**。我們有口譯員，所以您可以使用您的語言與我們溝通。您只需用英語告訴我們您希望使用甚麼語言即可。我們可以回答有關醫療的問題、提供有關資金援助的資訊或與您討論您的感受。我們的電話接聽時間是週一至週五上午 9 時至晚上 8 時。
- **麥克米倫（Macmillan）網站 (macmillan.org.uk)**。我們的網站有很多有關癌症和癌症病患生活的英文資訊。欲瞭解其他語言的更多資訊，請瀏覽 macmillan.org.uk/translations
- **資訊與支援服務**。您可透過資訊與支援服務中心向癌症援助專家諮詢並獲得書面資訊。瀏覽 macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres 尋找離您最近的諮詢中心或致電我們。您的醫院可能設有資訊中心。
- **本地支援團體**—您可以在支援小組中與其他受癌症影響的人交談。瀏覽 macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups 尋找離您最近的當地援助小組或致電我們。
- **麥克米倫（Macmillan）網路社群**—您亦可以前往 macmillan.org.uk/community 與其他受癌症影響的人交談。

辭彙表

單詞 (繁體中文)	英文	英文發音 (英文單詞的譯音)	意思
貧血	Anaemia	阿尼米亞	血液中的 <u>紅血球</u> 數量減少。
食慾	Appetite	阿配泰特	對於進食的慾望。
呼吸困難	Breathlessness	布瑞特勒斯呢司	發現呼吸困難或呼吸急促。
細胞	Cells	瑟爾思	構成身體器官和組織的微小結構單元。
心理諮詢師	Counsellor	康斯勒	受過培訓，幫助人們面對自己的情緒或個人問題的人士。
化療	Chemotherapy	基摩特拉披	使用藥物殺死 <u>癌細胞</u> 的癌症治療方法。
糖尿病	Diabetes	戴耳比替私	一種因為身體無法正常代謝糖，而導致血液中含糖量太高的疾病。
營養師	Dietician	戴餓替順	食品和營養方面的專家。他們可以告訴您哪些食物最適合您。如果您有飲食上的問題，他們也可以為您提供建議。
荷爾蒙治療	Hormonal therapy	荷爾蒙那·特拉披	透過影響體內荷爾蒙的癌症治療方法。
荷爾蒙	Hormone	荷爾蒙	體內產生並控制器官如何運作的物質，且有分為不同的類型。

按摩	Massage	馬殺雞	一種使用觸摸和輕撫來緩解緊張的輔助療法。
物理治療師	Physiotherapist	費西歐特拉波斯特	幫助人透過某些動作或運動從疾病或受傷中康復的專業人士。
放療	Radiotherapy	雷迪歐特拉披	使用高能 X 射線 (如 X 光) 殺死癌細胞的癌症治療方法。
合適的調整	Reasonable adjustments	瑞瑟那波·阿澤斯特 蒙特	您的僱主在工作中可以為您做出的改變，讓您可以繼續工作或返回工作。保護人民免受歧視的法律規定，您的僱主必須在某些情況下進行這些改變。
類固醇	Steroids	斯特洛依德	某些人的癌症治療中可能包含的藥物。
手術治療	Surgery	瑟覺銳	一種通過切除全部或部分惡性腫瘤的治療癌症方式，也被稱為動手術。
太極	Tai chi	太極	一種結合深呼吸、放鬆和慢動的運動。
標靶治療	Targeted therapy	踏格特·特拉披	使用藥物靶向並破壞癌細胞的癌症治療方法。
甲狀腺	Thyroid	太若伊德	一種將賀爾蒙釋放到血液中的頸部腺體。
瑜珈	Yoga	瑜珈	一種運用柔和伸展、深呼吸和移動的運動。

更多繁體中文版資訊

我們提供更多關於以下主題的繁體中文資訊：

癌症類型	應對癌症
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 乳癌• 大腸癌• 肺癌• 前列腺癌	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 若您被診斷患有癌症—快速指南• 飲食問題與癌症• 生命的終點• 經濟援助—福利救濟金• 經濟援助—財務協助• 健康飲食• 疲憊（疲勞）與癌症• 癌症治療的副作用• 您可以做些甚麼來幫助自己
治療 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 化療• 放療• 手術治療	

欲查看該資訊，請前往 macmillan.org.uk/translations

以中文與我們溝通

您可以撥打麥克米倫（Macmillan）免費電話 **0808 808 00 00** 透過口譯員以中文與我們交談。您可以同我們討論您的憂慮和醫療問題。當您致電我們時，只需用英語說出「中文」即可（請說出「釵尼斯」）。

我們的辦公時間是週一至週五上午 9 時至晚上 8 時。

參考文獻與致謝

該資訊由麥克米倫癌症援助機構（Macmillan Cancer Support）癌症資訊開發團隊編寫和編輯。並由翻譯公司提供繁體中文的翻譯版本。

本資料單資訊以麥克米倫（Macmillan）宣傳冊《應對疲勞》為基礎編制而成。我們可以将宣傳冊發送給您，但完整手冊只有英語版本。

本資訊單已由相關專家審閱，並得到顧問醫療腫瘤學家和麥克米倫（Macmillan）首席醫療編輯，即我們的醫學編輯 Tim Iveson 博士的批准。

感謝安寧療護護士 Terry Capecci、臨床療效部主任 Jane Eades、瑪麗·居裡。同時感謝審閱本資訊的癌症患者。

我們所有的資料都依據可獲得的最佳證據。關於我們所用資源的更多資訊，請透過 cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk 聯絡我們。

MAC15754_Traditional Chinese



內容審閱日期：2018 年 10 月

計畫下次審閱日期：2021 年

我們盡最大努力確保我們提供的資訊準確無誤，但其並不能反映最新的醫學研究情況，因為這是不斷變化的。如果您擔心您的健康狀況，則應諮詢您的醫生。麥克米倫（Macmillan）對由於此資訊或第三方資訊（如我們所連結到的網站上的資訊）的任何不準確所造成的任何損失或損害不承擔任何責任。

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Tiredness (fatigue) and cancer

This information is about fatigue. Fatigue means feeling very tired. It can be caused by cancer or cancer treatments.

Any words that are underlined are explained in the word list at the end. The word list also includes the pronunciation of the words in English.

If you have any questions about this information, ask your doctor or nurse at the hospital where you are having treatment.

You can also call Macmillan Cancer Support on freephone **0808 808 00 00**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm. We have interpreters, so you can speak to us in your own language. When you call us, please tell us in English which language you need (say “xxxxx”).

There is more cancer information in [language] at macmillan.org.uk/translations

This information is about:

- What is fatigue?
- What causes fatigue?
- Ways to manage fatigue
- Coping with fatigue at work
- Caring for someone with fatigue
- How Macmillan can help you
- Word list
- More information in [language]
- References and thanks

What is fatigue?

Fatigue is when you feel very tired most or all of the time. It is a common problem for people with cancer.

Fatigue caused by cancer is different from the tiredness that someone without cancer can get. People with cancer may get tired more quickly after activity and resting or sleeping does not relieve the tiredness.

For most people, fatigue gets better after treatment finishes. But for some it may continue for months or even years. Everyone is different and there is no way to know how long fatigue may last for each person.

Fatigue can affect you in different ways. Some of the common effects of fatigue are:

- difficulty doing simple things, such as brushing your hair or getting dressed
- feeling you have no energy or strength
- difficulty concentrating and remembering things
- difficulty thinking, speaking or making decisions
- feeling breathless after light activity
- feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- difficulty sleeping (insomnia)
- losing interest in sex
- feeling more emotional than usual.

It can be frustrating and overwhelming when you feel tired most of the time. It is important to tell your doctors and nurses about how it makes you feel. There are ways they may be able to help. There are also things you can do for yourself that may help. For example, being physically active can help your fatigue.

What causes fatigue?

Fatigue may be caused by:

- the cancer
- cancer treatments
- anaemia
- eating problems
- other health problems
- psychological effects of cancer.

The cancer

- For some people, the cancer may cause fatigue.
- This might be because of the symptoms of cancer. For example, parts of your body may be swollen because the cancer has caused a build-up of fluid. This can make them feel heavy and it can be difficult to move around.
- You may feel tired because the cancer has reduced the number of red blood cells. A reduced number of red blood cells is called anaemia.
- Cancers that cause changes in hormone levels, such as breast or prostate cancer, may cause fatigue.

Cancer treatments

- If fatigue is caused by cancer treatment, it usually gets better after treatment finishes. But for some people it may continue for many months, or even years.
- Surgery – Fatigue after surgery is usually temporary but depends on the type of surgery.
- Chemotherapy and radiotherapy – Fatigue usually improves 6 to 12 months after treatment ends but sometimes it can last longer. Sometimes these treatments may cause long-term effects such as breathlessness or heart problems. These are likely to make you feel more tired. Chemotherapy and radiotherapy may also cause anaemia.
- Hormonal therapy and targeted therapy – Some of these therapies can cause fatigue for the time that you are taking them.

We have more information in other languages about surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and side effects of cancer treatment. Visit macmillan.org.uk/translations or call **0808 808 00 00**.

Anaemia

Anaemia is caused by not having enough haemoglobin (Hb) in the blood. Haemoglobin is found in red blood cells and takes oxygen around the body, which gives us energy. If you have anaemia you may feel

- tired
- breathless
- dizzy and light-headed.

Anaemia may be caused by chemotherapy or radiotherapy. Your doctor can check if you have anaemia. If you do have it, you may need treatment to make you feel better.

Eating problems

If you are not eating the same amount of food as you would normally, this may cause you to have less energy and feel tired. It is important to tell your nurse or doctor if you are having problems eating.

If you are nauseous and cannot eat, tell your doctor. They may be able to give you medicine to help. If you cannot take medicine for nausea, or cannot keep it down due to vomiting, speak to your doctor or nurse. There are other ways of taking anti-sickness medicines.

We have a factsheet in [language] called **Eating problems and cancer** that gives more information. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/translations](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/translations) or call **0808 808 00 00**.

Pain

If you have pain, this can cause fatigue. Painkillers and other treatments for pain can help. If your pain is relieved, it can also help your fatigue.

Other medical problems

Diabetes, heart problems or thyroid problems may also make fatigue worse. Sometimes, if you are taking medicines for other conditions, these can make you feel tired too.

Loss of muscle strength

If you have fatigue, you may become less active over time. When your muscles are not being used regularly, they become weaker. Having weak muscles means you will find it difficult and tiring to do even simple tasks. It may also mean you are more at risk of falling over.

Being physically active is the best way to keep your muscle strength and build up your energy.

Emotional effects of cancer

Fatigue can be caused by the emotional effects of cancer. People feel different emotions when they have cancer. You might feel worried, sad or angry. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Sometimes, feeling difficult emotions can make it harder to sleep. Then not getting enough sleep can make you more tired.

There are different types of emotional support you may find helpful, including talking and complementary therapies.

Ways to manage fatigue

Ways your healthcare team can help

It is important to talk about fatigue with your healthcare team. There may be ways to improve it.

Your doctor will check for any causes of fatigue that can be treated, such as anaemia. They may examine you and you may have some blood tests. They may also look at the medicines you are taking. This is to check whether they can make changes to them that might improve fatigue. For example, they may reduce the dose of a tablet that makes you sleepy.

Drug treatments for fatigue

There are not any drug treatments to help prevent or improve fatigue yet. Steroids, which are used to treat other health problems, can sometimes be helpful. But they can have side effects, so you should talk to your doctor about the possible benefits and disadvantages.

Research trials are carried out to try to find new and better drug treatments. This includes drug treatments for fatigue. Many hospitals now take part in these trials. Speak to your doctor about whether you could take part in a research trial on treating fatigue.

Getting support

If you are finding it difficult to cope with fatigue, it can help to explain any problems to your doctor or nurse.

Tell them about the activities you find difficult. These activities may be things like climbing stairs, cooking or bathing. Let them know if anything makes the fatigue better or worse. You could try keeping a diary of your fatigue. For example, note down times of day when it is worse or things that help you feel better. You can show it to your doctor or nurse.

Here are some questions you may like to ask:

- What could be causing my fatigue?
- Are there any treatments that may help?
- What can I do to reduce my fatigue?
- Could my medicines be affecting my energy level?
- What help is available?

Things you can do

There are different things you can do to manage your fatigue. Some of these may reduce your fatigue. Others may help you cope better.

Planning ahead

If you have fatigue, planning ahead is important. This helps to make sure you can still do the things you most want to do.

- Use a diary to help you record when you feel your best and when you feel most tired.
- Try to plan bigger tasks for times when you are likely to feel less tired.
- Try to plan enough time to rest after a period of activity.

Make sure you look after your own needs and get enough rest, even if you have others to think about.

Diet

- Eating well can help increase your energy. If you have a reduced appetite or have other problems eating, ask to see a dietitian at the hospital. They can give you advice on what is best to eat.
- When your appetite is good make sure you eat well. You should always try to drink plenty of fluids.
- Keep a diary each day of what you eat and when. Then you can see if you have more energy after certain foods. It might help if someone else can prepare food for you. Or you could buy ready-made meals or use an organisation that delivers meals to your home.

We have a factsheet in [language] called **Healthy eating** that gives more information. Visit macmillan.org.uk/translations or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Physical activity

Physical activity can help reduce fatigue. Being active may help

- boost your appetite
- give you more energy
- build up your muscle strength
- improve sleep.

It is usually safe to start some physical activity during or after treatment. If you decide to do some physical activity, it is important to make sure you do it safely. You could start by sitting up in a chair rather than lying down in bed while you are recovering. Gradually build up to walking short distances around the house. Even if you have been used to regular physical activity before you were diagnosed with cancer, you may need to be more careful.

There are lots of ways you can become more active, including:

- doing more in your house, such as housework or gardening
- walking or cycling to work, shops, or to see friends
- stretching exercises like yoga or tai chi.

Do not exercise if you feel unwell, breathless, or if you have pain. Tell your doctor if you feel unwell.

Before you start to do any physical activity or increase the amount you do, it is important to get advice from a healthcare professional. Your cancer specialist or GP can refer you to a physiotherapist. They can help you build up your physical fitness and muscle strength.

Sleep

Your fatigue may make you feel like sleeping all the time. But it is important to keep to a sleep routine. Most people try to sleep between 6 and 8 hours each night. Good quality sleep may help with fatigue. It may also reduce your need to sleep during the day.

Tips for a better night's sleep:

- Go to bed and get up at about the same time every day.
- Try not to sleep late into the day after a sleepless night. This can lead to a disrupted sleep pattern.
- Try to do gentle exercise like walking. This can help you feel naturally tired and ready for sleep.
- Keep your mind occupied with activities like reading, games or puzzles. This can also help you feel naturally ready to sleep.
- Be aware of how naps affect you. Some people find that daytime naps help them sleep better at night, while others sleep less well after them.
- Steroids can cause sleep problems. If you are taking steroids, ask your doctor if you can take them earlier in the day.

Emotional support

Counselling

Fatigue can affect your emotions. It can make you feel more anxious or lower in mood. If you are struggling emotionally, you may find counselling helpful.

Counsellors are trained to listen. They can help you deal with difficult emotions.

Many hospitals have counsellors or staff who are specially trained to provide emotional support to people affected by cancer. Your cancer doctor or specialist nurse can tell you what services are available. They can also refer you. Some GPs also have counsellors in their practice, or they can refer you to one.

Support groups

Some people find it helps to talk to other people who have had fatigue. Most areas in the UK have support groups. They are sometimes led by a healthcare professional. Other members of the group may be in a similar position to you.

You can call our Macmillan Support Line on 0808 808 00 00 to find out about support groups in your area. We can try to find out if there is a support group where people speak the same language as you.

Complementary therapies

Complementary therapies are treatments or activities that can make you feel better. They do not treat cancer. There are different complementary therapies that may help with fatigue, such as:

- relaxation
- massage therapy
- yoga.

Some of these therapies may be available on the NHS. Your GP can give you more details. You may also be able to get them through a cancer support group.

To stay safe, it is important to check a therapist's qualifications and experience. If you need help with this, ask your doctor or nurse, or call the Macmillan Support Line on 0808 808 0000.

Before you use a complementary therapy, talk to your specialist doctor or nurse. Some therapies may affect your cancer treatment.

Tips for managing everyday activities

If you need help with things at home then you may be able to ask family, friends and neighbours. Building up a support network can make a big difference. If you always seem to be coping well, your family and friends may not realise how much you need help. Or they may be waiting for you to ask for help.

There are things you can do that may help with everyday tasks.

Housekeeping

- Spread tasks out over the week. Do a little housework each day rather than lots at one time.
- If possible, ask other people to do heavy work, such as gardening.
- Sit down to do some tasks, if you can.
- If possible, employ a cleaner to help. This may be expensive. You may be able to get help at home from social services.

Shopping

- If possible, go grocery shopping with a friend or family member for extra help.
- Most large supermarkets offer online shopping which can be delivered to your home.
- Use a shopping trolley so you do not need to carry a heavy basket. A wheeled shopping bag may help with shopping and getting things home.
- Shop at less busy times.
- Ask shop staff for help packing and taking groceries to the car.

Preparing meals

- Try having ready-made meals or pre-cooked food when you are most tired.
- If you can, sit down while preparing meals.
- Prepare extra meals or double portions when you are feeling less tired and freeze them for when you need them.

Washing and dressing

- Sit down in the bath rather than standing in a shower if you can, as this may help to use less energy.
- Sit down in the shower if you can, to avoid standing for too long. An occupational therapist may be able to get you a shower seat.

Occupational therapists

Occupational therapists help people who have difficulty moving around or doing everyday tasks such as dressing, washing and cooking. They may be able to visit you at home to help you find ways to do things more easily. Your cancer doctor, specialist nurse or GP can refer you to an occupational therapist.

Childcare

If you have a family, you might find it difficult to look after them while coping with fatigue. It can be upsetting when you are unable to do your usual family activities. To make childcare easier you could:

- explain to your children that you feel tired often and will not be able to do as much with them as before.
- plan activities with your children that you can do sitting down – for example, play board games or do a puzzle.
- try to plan activities where there are places for you to sit down while the children play.
- avoid carrying small children – use a pram or pushchair instead.
- try to involve your children in some household tasks.
- ask for and accept help from family and friends.

Driving

Driving can be difficult and dangerous if you feel very tired. You may be less alert than normal, and less able to concentrate. Your reaction time will also be reduced. You might find these tips helpful:

- Do not drive if you feel very tired.
- If possible, ask a family member or friend to drive you.
- If you need to get to hospital appointments, ask your nurse or doctor if there is any hospital transport available so that you do not have to drive.
- If you feel yourself falling asleep while driving, stop in a safe place and take a break.

Coping with fatigue at work

You may find fatigue affects the way you work.

Anyone with cancer is protected by the Equality Act 2010. This means that employers should not treat people with cancer unfairly. It also means that employers are expected to make reasonable adjustments at work to support people with cancer.

You could talk to your employer about:

- changing your hours, or working less
- changing your start and finish time so you can travel to and from work at less busy times
- sharing some of your work with other colleagues
- having a parking place near to where you work
- working from home at agreed times
- doing lighter work if your job involves physical exertion or heavy lifting.

Explaining the effects of fatigue to your colleagues might also help you manage your fatigue at work. It may be difficult for some people to understand how tired you are, especially if you look well.

If you are self-employed, it can help to talk to the Department for Work and Pensions about benefits that you may be entitled to claim. We have a factsheet in [language] called **Financial support – benefits** that gives more information. Visit macmillan.org.uk/translations or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Caring for someone with fatigue

Many people give support to a family member, partner, friend, or neighbour who has fatigue. Caring for someone with fatigue can mean many things, such as helping with personal care, providing transport or organising appointments.

If you are caring for someone with fatigue, there are many simple things that you can do to help:

- Acknowledge that fatigue is difficult for you both.
- Help the person keep a diary of their fatigue. For example, note down times of day when it is worse or things that help them feel better. This will help you both see when the person with fatigue has more or less energy to do things.
- Try to help the person you care for be more active or make changes to their diet.

You can also go to appointments at the hospital with the person you care for. You could help them explain to the healthcare team how the fatigue is affecting you both. You could show them the person's fatigue diary and ask their advice about what else you can do to help.

Looking after yourself

When you are caring for someone else it is important to look after yourself too. Make sure you keep up with your own health appointments. This includes any vaccinations you need, such as the flu jab. If you are taking any medicines regularly, it is important you have a supply of these.

If you can, try to:

- take breaks
- eat well
- be active
- get a good night's sleep
- get some support for yourself – perhaps by talking with other carers in a support group.

You can call our Macmillan Support Line on 0808 808 00 00 to find out about support groups in your area. We can try to find out if there is a support group where people speak the same language as you.

How Macmillan can help you

Macmillan is here to help you and your family. You can get support from:

- **The Macmillan Support Line (0808 808 00 00).** We have interpreters, so you can speak to us in your language. Just tell us, in English, the language you want to use. We can answer medical questions, give you information about financial support, or talk to you about your feelings. The phone line is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm.
- **The Macmillan website (macmillan.org.uk).** Our site has lots of English information about cancer and living with cancer. There is more information in other languages at macmillan.org.uk/translations
- **Information and support services.** At an information and support service, you can talk to a cancer support specialist and get written information. Find your nearest centre at macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres or call us. Your hospital might have a centre.
- **Local support groups** – At a support group you can talk to other people affected by cancer. Find a group near you at macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups or call us.
- **Macmillan Online Community** – You can also talk to other people affected by cancer online at macmillan.org.uk/community

Word list

Word (target language)	In English	How to say in English (transliteration of English word)	Meaning
	Anaemia		A reduced number of red blood <u>cells</u> in your blood.
	Appetite		When you feel you want to eat food.
	Breathlessness		Finding it harder to breath or breathing quickly.
	Cells		The tiny building blocks that make up the organs and tissues of our body.
	Counsellor		Someone who is trained to help people cope with their emotions or personal problems.
	Chemotherapy		A cancer treatment that uses drugs to kill cancer <u>cells</u> .
	Diabetes		A condition where the amount of sugar in the blood is too high because the body does not use it properly.
	Dietician		An expert in food and nutrition. They can tell you which foods are best for you. They can also give you advice if you have problems with your diet.
	Hormonal therapy		A cancer treatment that works by affecting hormones in the body.
	Hormone		A substance made by the body that controls how organs work. There are different types of hormones.
	Massage		A complementary therapy that uses touch and gentle

			pressure to relieve tension.
	Physiotherapist		A professional who helps someone use movement or exercise to recover from illness or injury.
	Radiotherapy		A cancer treatment that uses high-energy rays, such as x-rays, to kill cancer cells.
	Reasonable adjustments		Changes to your work that your employer can make to allow you to stay at work or return to work. Laws that protect people from discrimination say that your employer must make these changes in certain situations.
	Steroids		A medicine that some people may have as part of their cancer treatment.
	Surgery		A way of treating cancer by removing all or part of the cancer. This is also known as having an operation.
	Tai chi		A type of exercise that combines deep breathing and relaxation with slow movements.
	Targeted therapy		A cancer treatment that uses drugs that target and attack cancer cells.
	Thyroid		A gland in the neck that releases hormones into the blood.
	Yoga		A type of exercise using gentle stretching, deep breathing and movement.

More information in [language]

We have information in [language] about these topics:

<p>Types of cancer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breast cancer• Large bowel cancer• Lung cancer• Prostate cancer <p>Treatments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chemotherapy• Radiotherapy• Surgery	<p>Coping with cancer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you're diagnosed with cancer – A quick guide• Eating problems and cancer• End of life• Financial support – benefits• Financial support – help with costs• Healthy eating• Tiredness (fatigue) and cancer• Side effects of cancer treatment• What you can do to help yourself
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To see this information, go to macmillan.org.uk/translations

Speak to us in [language]

You can call Macmillan free on **0808 808 00 00** and speak to us in [language] through an interpreter. You can talk to us about your worries and medical questions. Just say [language] in English when you call (say “xxxxx”).

We are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm.

References and thanks

This information has been written and edited by Macmillan Cancer Support's Cancer Information Development team. It has been translated into [language] by a translation company.

The information included is based on the Macmillan booklet **Coping with fatigue**. We can send you a copy, but the full booklet is only available in English.

This information has been reviewed by relevant experts and approved by our Chief Medical Editor, Dr Tim Iveson, Consultant Medical Oncologist and Macmillan Chief Medical Editor.

With thanks to: Terry Capecci, Palliative Care Nurse, and Jane Eades, Head of Clinical Effectiveness, Marie Curie. Thanks also to the people affected by cancer who reviewed this information.

All our information is based on the best evidence available. For more information about the sources we use, please contact us at **cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk**

MAC15754_Language



Content reviewed: October 2018

Next planned review: 2021

We make every effort to ensure that the information we provide is accurate but it should not be relied upon to reflect the current state of medical research, which is constantly changing. If you are concerned about your health, you should consult your doctor. Macmillan cannot accept liability for any loss or damage resulting from any inaccuracy in this information or third-party information such as information on websites to which we link.

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