

Boosting your energy

Information about managing weakness
and fatigue



**Marie
Curie**

Care and support
through terminal illness

Weakness and fatigue can be a problem if you're living with a terminal illness and may affect you in different ways. If you're feeling tired, there are some things you can try to help you conserve energy. Many of them involve making simple changes to your routine.

This leaflet includes information about:

- weakness and fatigue
- managing fatigue
- how we can help
- useful organisations
- further information



You can find more information about common symptoms and how to manage at mariecurie.org.uk/symptoms or call the Marie Curie Support Line on **0800 090 2309***.

About weakness and fatigue

Fatigue is a feeling of extreme tiredness, weakness or lack of energy. It isn't related to how much activity you do and isn't necessarily improved by rest or sleep. Fatigue can affect all aspects of life. People with severe fatigue describe it as paralyzing.

Long-term illnesses, including cancer, can cause fatigue and so can some of the treatments used for these conditions, such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy. Most people with a terminal illness will experience fatigue at some point, but little is known about how it develops or why symptoms persist.

Boosting your energy

The common signs of fatigue are:

- problems sleeping
- problems with your short-term memory
- having a feeling of heavy limbs
- feeling drained and as if you have no energy
- difficulty completing simple tasks, such as washing and dressing
- difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- a lack of motivation and not enjoying the things you usually do, like walking or reading

Managing fatigue

Saving your energy

It can help to plan activities for when you feel most energetic and to avoid doing things you don't need to do. Taking short daytime naps or rests and sitting down to do tasks, like preparing meals or gardening, can also help conserve energy.

Rest and sleep are important, but try to balance this with the amount of activity you do to avoid affecting your night time sleep. Doing the same sorts of things at the same time each day, and getting up and going to bed at the same time every day may help you to feel less tired and improve your sleep at night. Make sure your bed is as comfortable as possible.

Physical activity

It's good to stay as active as possible without overdoing things. This might include physiotherapy or exercises to build your strength. Some moderate exercise, like walking around the garden or to the end of the road, will improve your circulation and may help you to feel better.



Simon Rawles/Marie Curie



Our leaflet about exercise has some more suggestions that you may find useful. Call **0800 090 2309*** to order a copy for free.

Wellbeing therapies and diet

Complementary therapies, like massage or meditation, may help with feelings of stress and tension and help to increase energy levels.

Having a well-balanced diet, including plenty of fluids and energy-giving foods like high calorie snacks or dairy foods, may also help increase your energy. Eating little and often can help when normal-sized meals feel too much to cope with. Make sure you let family and friends know how you feel, so they can support you.



For more information about complementary therapies and eating well, please visit **mariecurie.org.uk/wellbeing**

How we can help

We help everyone affected by a terminal illness get the information and support they need, whether you have an illness yourself or you're a family member or friend.

Marie Curie Support Line

0800 090 2309*

Ask questions and find support. Open 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, 11am to 5pm Saturday. * Your call may be recorded for training and monitoring purposes.

Marie Curie Community **community.mariecurie.org.uk**

For anyone affected by terminal illness to share experiences and support each other. Available 24 hours a day.

More information and further support

We also have an extensive range of information materials available to view online or in print. Visit **mariecurie.org.uk/help** where you can also find film guides, information about our services, and links to further support.

Marie Curie Nurses

Marie Curie Nurses work night and day, in people's homes across the UK, providing hands-on care and vital emotional support. If you're living with a terminal illness, they can help you stay surrounded by the people you care about most, in the place where you're most comfortable.

mariecurie.org.uk/nurses

Marie Curie Hospices

Our hospices offer the reassurance of specialist care and support, in a friendly, welcoming environment, for people living with a terminal illness and their loved ones – whether you're staying in the hospice, or just coming in for the day.

mariecurie.org.uk/hospices

Marie Curie Helper

We know the little things can make a big difference when you're living with a terminal illness. That's where our trained Helper volunteers come in. They can visit you regularly to have a chat to over a cup of tea, help you get to an appointment or just listen when you need a friendly ear.

mariecurie.org.uk/helper

Useful organisations

The British Complementary Medicine Association

0845 345 5977

bcma.co.uk

A membership organisation listing complementary medicine therapists who meet its code of ethics.

Carers UK

0808 808 7777 (England, Wales and Scotland)

028 9043 9843 (Northern Ireland)

carersuk.org

Provides expert advice, information and support to carers. There are links to its national services from the website homepage.

Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council

020 7653 1971

cnhc.org.uk

An accredited voluntary regulator for complementary therapists in the UK. Find a private (paid for) therapist near you or read about the different therapies available.

Macmillan Cancer Support

0808 808 00 00

macmillan.org.uk

Provides practical, medical and financial support for people affected by cancer.

Patient.co.uk

patient.co.uk

A free health site which contains over 4,000 health information leaflets, a wellbeing centre, a free health check, and forums where you can discuss your experiences with others.



Further information

This leaflet was produced by Marie Curie's Information and Support team. It has been reviewed by health and social care professionals and people affected by terminal illness.

If you'd like the list of sources used to create this information, please email review@mariecurie.org.uk or call the Marie Curie Support Line on **0800 090 2309***.

Notice

The information in this publication is provided for the benefit and personal use of people with a terminal illness, their families and carers.

This information is provided as general guidance for information purposes only. It should not be considered as medical or clinical advice, or used as a substitute for personalised or specific advice from a qualified medical practitioner. For legal, financial or other matters covered by this information, you should also consider seeking specific professional advice about your personal circumstances.

While we try to ensure that this information is accurate, we do not accept any liability arising from its use. Please refer to our website for our full terms and conditions.

Feedback form

If you have comments about this booklet, we'd love to hear from you. This will help us make sure we are providing the right information. Anything you tell us will only be used by the Information & Support Content team and will not be shared publicly. All information will be kept securely according to data protection standards.

We'd be very grateful if you could complete this form and return it to:
 Information and Support Content team, Marie Curie,
 89 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7TP
 Or you can email us at review@mariecurie.org.uk. Thank you.

Please tick

- I have a terminal illness
- I am a carer/ family member/ friend of someone with a terminal illness
- I am a health/social care professional using this resource to support someone affected by a terminal illness
- Other (please specify)

Where did you get this booklet from?

- Downloaded from the Marie Curie website
- Marie Curie Support Line
- Marie Curie Nurse, volunteer or hospice staff
- Healthcare professional (eg GP, district nurse)
- Other (please specify)

Did you find the information useful and did it meet your needs? eg, has this booklet given you a better understanding of the topic or helped you make a decision about next steps?

.....

Was there any information that you couldn't find that would have been helpful for you?

.....

Did you find the information in this booklet easy to understand?
 Please tell us if anything was unclear.

.....

Did you think the tone was appropriate for the subject matter?

.....

Did you feel you had the right amount of information?

.....



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Would you have preferred to access this information in another format (eg large print, braille, audio)

.....

Do you have any other comments?

.....

About you

Finding out a little bit about you will help us to understand the needs of our audience and make sure our information reaches everyone.

What is your gender or gender identity?

- Female Male Prefer to self identify Prefer not to say
-

Age

- Under 16 16-24 25-34 35-44 45-54
 55-64 65-74 75-84 85 or over
-

Ethnicity

- White British Black or Black British Mixed
 White other Asian or Asian British
-

What is your religion or belief?

.....

What is your sexual orientation?

- Bisexual Gay woman/lesbian Other
 Gay man Heterosexual/straight Prefer not to say
-

Where do you live? (Please provide the first part of your postcode in the space below eg 'CB1' or SE11)

.....

We are always looking for volunteers to help us review our content for people affected by terminal illness. If you would like to help, please complete the details below and we'll be in touch with more details.

Name

Address

Telephone Email

How would you like to be contacted? Post Telephone Email



Marie Curie – why we're here

We're here for people living with any terminal illness, and their families. We offer expert care, guidance and support to help them get the most from the time they have left.

Support Line

We offer a free, confidential service to provide information on everything from day-to-day care, to sorting out money matters or coping with your feelings. And we're here when you just need someone to talk to.

0800 090 2309

Open Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm, Saturdays 11am to 5pm.
Your call may be recorded for training and monitoring purposes.

You can also connect with someone from our Support Line team using our online chat service. Visit **mariecurie.org.uk/help**

Online community

Share experiences and speak to people in a similar situation.
Visit **community.mariecurie.org.uk**

Information

We have a wide range of health and social care information that can help you live well, plan ahead and make informed decisions. This has been certified by The Information Standard as being reliable, up to date and evidence-based.

All our information is available online at **mariecurie.org.uk/help**
For printed copies call **0800 090 2309**
or email **review@mariecurie.org.uk**



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