

Deborah M. Evans

What to do when Your Get Up and  
Go Got Up and Left



# “What to do when Your Get Up and Go Got Up and Left”

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# Objectives

## ● Fatigue

- What Is It?
- Why Is It happening?
- What Can Be Done?
- What Can I Do About It?

## ● Chemo Brain

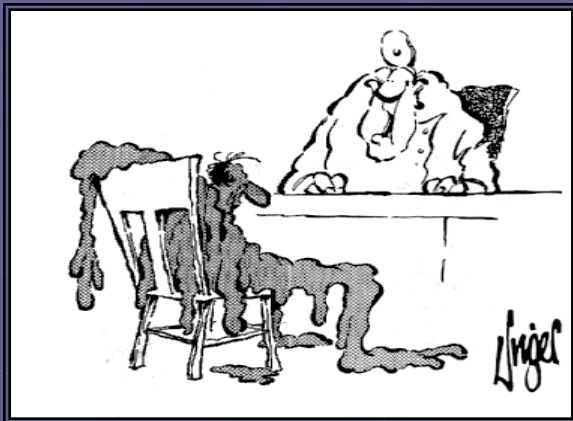
- What Is It?
- Why Is It happening?
- What Can Be Done?
- What Can I Do About It?

## ● Post Surgery Pain Syndromes

## ● Chemotherapy Induced Peripheral Neuropathy

- What Is It?
- Why Is It happening?
- What Can Be Done?
- What Can I Do About It?

# What makes you think "fatigue" is your problem??



# Resources For Patients

<http://www.myfavouritemedicine.com/cancer-fatigue>





# Cancer Related Fatigue

- Distressing
- Persistent
- Subjective
- Physical, Emotional and/or Cognitive
- Tiredness or Exhaustion Not in Proportion to Recent Activity
- Related to Cancer or Cancer Treatment
- Interferes with Usual Functioning



# Fatigue

## Acute Fatigue

- Protective mechanism
- Intense
- Short duration
- Relieved by rest or a good nights sleep

## Chronic Fatigue

- Harmful
- Unusual, excessive and persistent
- Does not respond to rest
- Interferes with normal activities of daily living



# Prevalence of Fatigue

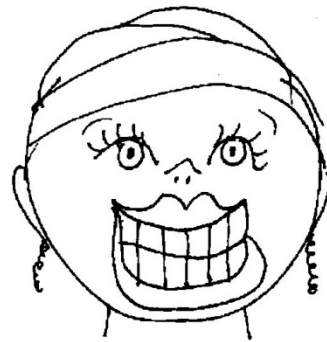
- Nearly universal among people with cancer
- 60-96% of people going through treatment
- Persists after treatment completion
- Emerging as one of the most important symptoms as we have better treatment for pain and nausea now

Wagner Cella, BJC (2004) 91: 822-828



# Barriers To Dealing With Fatigue

How Do You Feel Today?



In my doctor's  
office....



Later, at home....




# Barriers To Dealing With Fatigue

- Expectation that we should be able to do what we did before we had cancer
- Expectation of others that the treatment is over and we should just get going and try harder
- Only 2/10 people believe that there was something that could be done about fatigue in one study



# Why is Dealing with Fatigue so Important?

- Prevents you from living a normal life
- Change in employment status  financial impact
- Interferes with functional status
- Interferes with quality of life
- Interfere with social life
- May disrupt cancer treatments



# Why does Cancer Fatigue Happen?

- Cancer itself
- Side effects of cancer treatments (eg. Anemia)
- Side effects of medications (eg. Steroids, pain medications, sleeping or anxiety medications)
- Pain
- Nutrition (altered metabolism, increased demand, decreased intake)





# Why does Cancer Fatigue Happen?

- Psychological/Social Factors
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
- Other health issues (eg. Hypothyroidism, diabetes, heart disease, COPD)





# Fatigue: What to Do?

1. Talk to your doctor
2. Adjust your expectations
3. Ask for and accept assistance from others
4. Use energy conserving strategies
5. Ensure you have good sleep habits
6. Maintain as normal activity as Possible
7. Ensure your nutrition is optimized



# Talk To Your Doctor

- Be honest
- Assess for medical related causes (physical exam, blood work, tests)
- Review symptoms to ensure pain, dyspnea and other symptoms managed
- Review medication for potential causes
- Fatigue assessment



# Fatigue Assessment

- Severity
- What does it feel like?
- What makes it better or worse?
- When did it first start?
- How has it changed since you had treatment?
- When does it happen?
- How has fatigue affected your life?
- What does it mean to you?
- What else is going on in your life?

# Fatigue Assessment

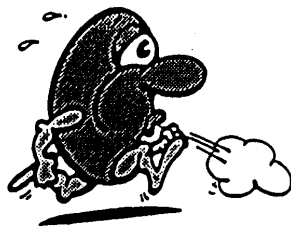
## FATIGUE SCALE

Select the number that best describes how you feel today.



NO  
FATIGUE

0



MILD  
FATIGUE

1

2

3

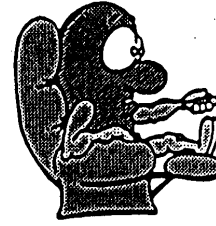


MODERATE  
FATIGUE

4

5

6



EXTREME  
FATIGUE

7

8

9



THE WORST  
FATIGUE

10

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# Fatigue Assessment

## Fatigue Diary

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Got Up at: \_\_\_\_\_

Went to Bed at: \_\_\_\_\_

Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Rest: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Factors: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Fatigue level: (0-10): \_\_\_\_\_



# Exercise



- May be the last thing you feel like doing
- Decreased levels of activity are associated with loss of muscle mass which results in the need for increased energy expenditures to perform usual activities
- Seek input from health professionals
- Structured Programs
  - YWCA Encore: After Breast Cancer Exercise program
  - YW/YMCA CANWELL Exercise Program

# CanWell



- 12-week supervised exercise and education program
- For individuals who have been diagnosed with cancer at any stage of their cancer treatment.
- Kinesiologists and Certified fitness leaders
- Completed additional training on exercising safely with people diagnosed with cancer.
- Supported by the on-going collaborative relationship with a physiotherapist and nurse practitioner from Hamilton Health Sciences who have expertise in cancer.

# Exercise



- Maintain as normal activity as possible
- Start with a low level of intensity and duration and progress slowly
- Set a routine, several times a week for 15-30 minutes
- Enlist a supportive friend or spouse to keep you on track
- Listen to your body, if you feel stiffness and soreness which does not recover in 24 hours you are doing too much



# Energy Conservation Strategies

- Set priorities
- Pace yourself
- Delegate tasks to others
- Schedule activities at times of peak energy
- Plan activities ahead of time
- Alter performance of activities (eg. Sit to make dinner)
- Eliminate nonessential activities
- Make time for things you enjoy



# Sleep

- Several studies have shown that fatigued cancer patients spend more time resting and sleeping but their pattern of sleep is often severely disrupted







# Sleep

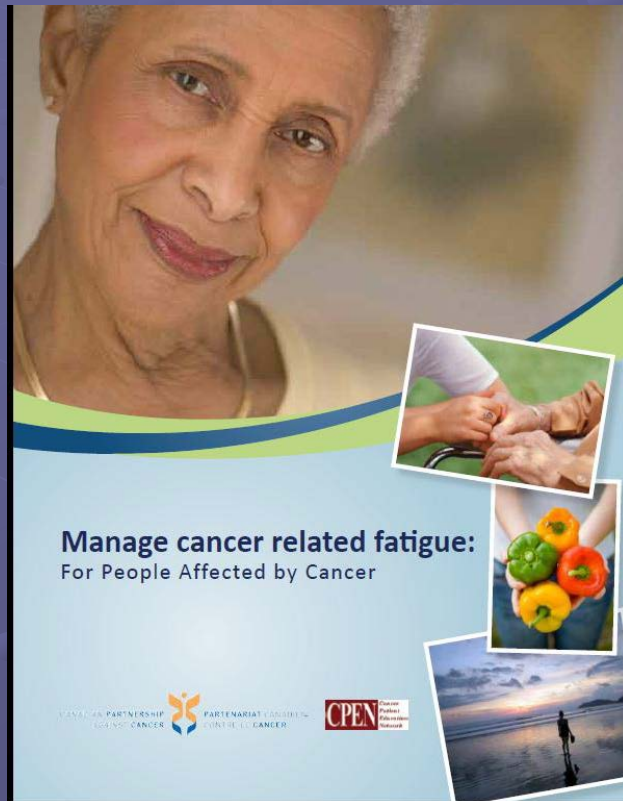
- Establish a comfortable environment conducive to sleep (eg. Dark, quiet, cool)
- Go to bed at approximately the same time each night
- Set an alarm for morning to maintain a regular rising time
- Limit afternoon naps to 45 min (set an alarm)
- Avoid caffeine after noon
- Avoid alcohol
- Avoid large meals at bedtime, have a small protein rich snack
- Avoid evening stimulation

# Nutrition



- Food=Calories=Energy
- Eat small meals throughout the day
- Keep snacks and drinks handy so you can have something quickly when you feel up to it
- Ask friends or relatives to prepare meals
- Use prepared meals or easy to prepare and serve meals
- Try new things/flavours/textures
- Ensure sufficient protein and fluids in diet
- Ask for a referral to a dietician

# Resources For Patients



## In this pamphlet:

- What can I do to manage fatigue?
- What is cancer related fatigue?
- What causes cancer related fatigue?
- How can my health care team help?
- When do I need to get medical help right away?
- How do I keep track of my fatigue?
- Where can I get more information?



# Other Community Resources

