

# Understanding Your Prostate Cancer-Related Symptoms: Fatigue

A guide for men diagnosed with prostate cancer and their loved ones

## Recognizing Symptoms and Side Effects<sup>1,2</sup>

It is important to recognize the symptoms of prostate cancer and the potential side effects of treatment so that your healthcare team can help you receive the best possible care.



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## In their own words: How do men with prostate cancer describe fatigue?<sup>3</sup>



### Patient Perspective<sup>4</sup>

*"It feels like I was sentenced to home imprisonment by this situation. Nothing that involves me going out is simple anymore. I can't walk far, I get tired with minimum effort and the worst of all is that I can't get myself out of the bed these days. The home provides me safety but at the same time isolates me from the rest of the world."*

Unwillingness  
Exhaustion **Malaise**  
**Sleeplessness**  
**Tiredness** Lack of Concentration  
Muscle Weakness Muscle Pain  
**Lack of Energy** Weariness

## What is fatigue?<sup>4-8</sup>



Fatigue is excessive tiredness and persistent lack of energy that does not get better after rest or sleep, and can occur with no obvious cause

Cancer-related fatigue is different from fatigue healthy people feel, and can negatively impact quality of life

Fatigue can be:



Mental



Physical

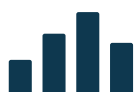


Emotional



Fatigue is very common in patients with cancer and is the **most common side effect** of prostate cancer treatment

About **3 in 4** men with prostate cancer experience fatigue



Fatigue can be experienced at different levels and may or may not be relieved by rest

## How fatigue can affect your daily life? Fatigue can make it hard to carry out your daily activities such as<sup>8</sup>:



Getting dressed, having a shower or preparing food



Social activities, such as enjoying time with friends and family



Understanding new information and making decisions

## Checklist: Am I experiencing fatigue?<sup>7,8</sup>

Use this checklist to help identify if you are experiencing fatigue.



### Mental Fatigue

- I have been spending more time in bed and/or sleeping more ☐
- I am unable to sleep or my sleep is disturbed ☐
- I often become confused or can't concentrate ☐
- I find it hard to think clearly or make decisions easily ☐



### Physical Fatigue

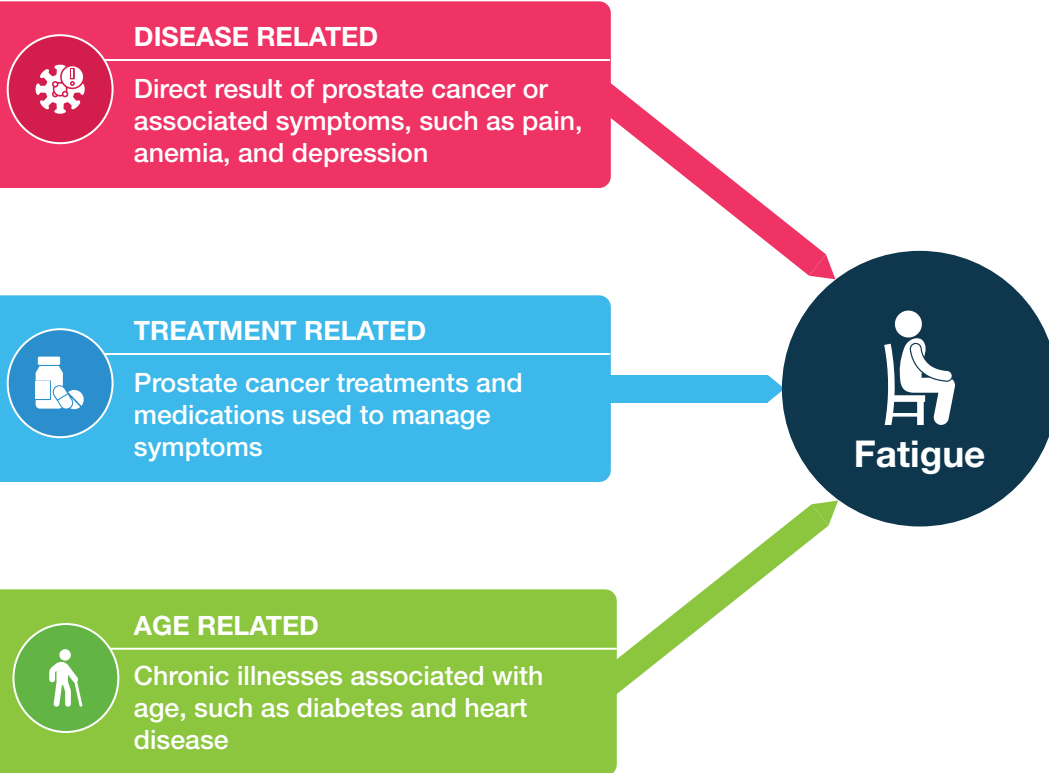
- I feel very weak and have little or no energy ☐
- My arms and legs feel heavy and hard to move ☐
- I am more tired than usual during or after my usual activities ☐
- My tiredness makes it hard for me to do things I normally do ☐



### Emotional Fatigue

- I feel irritable or frustrated ☐
- I lack interest or motivation in my daily life ☐
- I feel anxious, sad or depressed ☐

Fatigue is a complex symptom that can be impacted by multiple factors<sup>8,9</sup>:

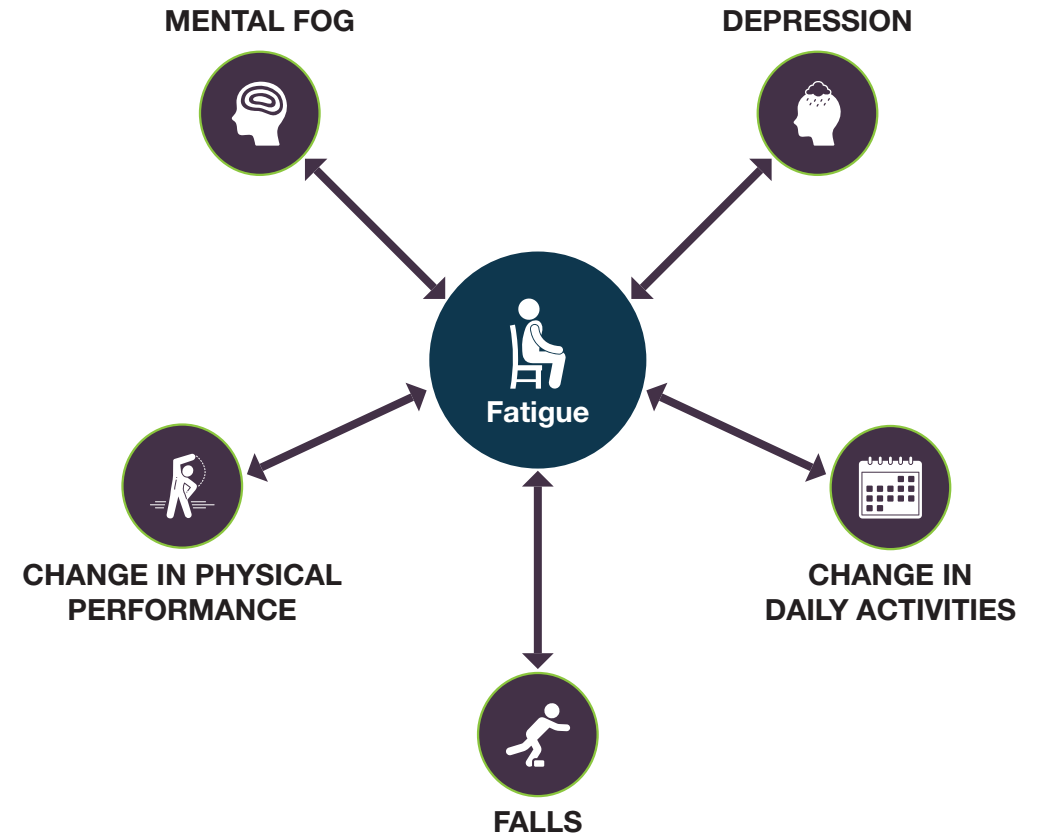


#### Additional Factors<sup>6,10</sup>

- Sleep disorders
- Nutrition problems
- Lack of physical activity and exercise
- Treatments for other medical conditions
- Psychological problems (pain, anxiety, depression)



Symptoms that can be caused by fatigue can also make your fatigue worse.<sup>7,8,11,12</sup>



#### Patient Perspective<sup>4</sup>

*“Being unable to care for yourself is the first thing that comes to my mind. Prior to treatment and the onset of this symptom I was able to care for myself without any problems or help from others. Now I find it extremely difficult and burdensome to do the same things of everyday life. . . imagine that even having a shower is an activity that causes me stress as it means pushing my body to the limit in order to accomplish this. . . I never thought that it would have been an ‘accomplishment’ simply to have a shower”*

## How would you rate your fatigue?<sup>5,8,10,11</sup>

Good communication with your healthcare team is key to successful evaluation and management of fatigue from your prostate cancer.

You can use the scale below to record how you feel and discuss the results with your healthcare team at each office visit to find the best management strategies for you.



How would you rate your fatigue?

NO FATIGUE

MILD

MODERATE

EXTREME

WORST

How tired did you feel during the past week?

NO FATIGUE

MILD

MODERATE

EXTREME

WORST

To what extent does fatigue prevent you from doing what you want to do?

NO FATIGUE

MILD

MODERATE

EXTREME

WORST

## What can you do about your fatigue? Strategies to discuss with your healthcare team<sup>8,12</sup>:



**Complementary therapies**  
(yoga, acupuncture, meditation and massage)



**Eat and drink well** (dietary or nutritional counseling)



**Regular exercise**  
(eg, walking)



**Try to be patient with yourself:** pace yourself, think about your energy levels, and balance activity and rest



**Ask for help:** talk to family, friends, and your healthcare team

## Questions you can ask your healthcare team<sup>8</sup>:

- Can prostate cancer treatments cause fatigue?
- How long might my fatigue last?
- What can I do to improve or manage my fatigue?
- What physical activity is suitable for me?
- Is there a local support group for men with prostate cancer-related fatigue?
- What other support is available to me?

### Patient Perspective<sup>4</sup>

*"Nothing is the same anymore, I lost my appetite to do anything nowadays, and how can you be happy if you cannot do the things that bring you pleasure at the time and place that you want? It feels like that I am living the life of others. . . I get to do the things that others are in the mood for and what others decide on my behalf. I am sorry for myself because I do not see the 'living' in my life anymore."*



**Talk to your doctor or care team:** If you want to discuss the possibility of developing fatigue, or if you have been feeling excessively tired, whether physical or emotionally, let your doctor or care team know.

## Resources to Learn More

American Cancer Society. What is Fatigue or Weakness  
<https://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/physical-side-effects/fatigue/what-is-cancer-related-fatigue.html>

Prostate Cancer UK. Living With Prostate Cancer Fatigue  
<https://prostatecanceruk.org/prostate-information/living-with-prostate-cancer/fatigue>



## SPOTLIGHT ON:

# Fatigue



**References:** 1. Understanding Side Effects. Prostate Cancer Foundation. 2017. Accessed September 7, 2021. [https://www.pcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ProstateCancerPatientGuide\\_Singles\\_Final.pdf](https://www.pcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ProstateCancerPatientGuide_Singles_Final.pdf); 2. Understanding Side Effects. My Prostate Cancer Coach. Accessed September 7, 2021. <https://www.myprostatecancercoach.org/Prostate-Cancer-101/Understanding-Side-Effects>; 3. Yurtsever C, et al. *Dicle Medical Journal*. 2018;45(1):77-84; 4. Charalambous A, Kouta C. *Biomed Res Int*. 2016;2016:3989286; 5. Cancer Fatigue. *Cleveland Clinic*. Accessed September 7, 2021. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/5230-cancer-fatigue>; 6. Fatigue (PDQ®)—Patient Version. *National Cancer Institute*. Accessed August 27, 2021. <https://www.cancer.gov/aboutcancer/treatment/side-effects/fatigue/fatigue-pdq>; 7. What is Fatigue or Weakness. *American Cancer Society*. Accessed August 27, 2021. <https://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/physical-side-effects/fatigue/what-is-cancer-related-fatigue.html>; 8. What is Fatigue. *Prostate Cancer UK*. Accessed August 27, 2021. <https://prostatecanceruk.org/prostate-information/living-with-prostate-cancer/fatigue>; 9. Fatigue in Older Adults. *National Institute on Aging*. Accessed August 27, 2021. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/fatigue-older-adults>; 10. Cancer-related Fatigue. *Leukemia & Lymphoma Society*. Accessed August 27, 2021. <https://www.lls.org/treatment/managing-side-effects/cancer-related-fatigue>; 11. Managing Fatigue or Weakness. *American Cancer Society*. Accessed August 27, 2021. <https://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatmentsand-side-effects/physical-side-effects/fatigue/managing-cancer-related-fatigue.html>; 12. Fatigue. *Cancer.Net*. Accessed September 7, 2021. <https://www.cancer.net/coping-with-cancer/physical-emotional-and-social-effects-cancer/managing-physical-side-effects/fatigue>.



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