

Fatigue Management



Cancer-related fatigue is one of the most common side effects among pediatric cancer survivors (Silva et al., 2016).

Fatigue can interfere with:

- A child's recovery process and impacts their long-term functioning
- Activities of Daily Living (bathing, dressing, personal hygiene)
- Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (care of pets, care of others, meal prep, shopping, and laundry)
- Health Management (physical activity, social and emotional health maintenance)
- Rest and Sleep
- Education (academic, non-academic, extracurricular activities)
- Play
- Leisure participation (hobbies)
- Social participation (within community, family, friendship, and peer group participations)

Occupational therapists can contribute by helping manage the symptoms from a multidisciplinary approach (Silva et al., 2016).

Fatigue Management for Pediatric Cancer Patients

The 4 P's of Energy Conservation:



Prioritize

- Eliminate unnecessary things from your schedule.
- Alternate demanding tasks with less demanding ones.
- Prioritize rest



Position

- Adapt to activity demands (if you can do it sitting down, sit down).
- Position the things around you to take less physical effort to retrieve (i.e. lay out clothes the night before)



Plan

- Plan more demanding tasks for times of day when you have more energy.
- Utilize a schedule (i.e. if showering makes you super tired, shower at the end of the day so you don't have to spend the rest of the day exhausted).



Pace

- Allow plenty of time to complete activities.
- Keep a slow, steady pace and try not to rush which will make you more tired.
- Listen to what your body says about how you are feeling, and take a break when you need it.

Additional Things to Help with Fatigue Management:



Sleep

- Create a regular sleep schedule.
- Take 15-30 min short naps during the day to prevent fatigue.



Physical Activity

- Yoga
- Low -moderate intensity exercise
- Breathing exercises
- Mindfulness meditation



Engage in Activities

- Play, Art & Crafts
- Spend time with family & friends
- Prioritize what's important to the child to keep them engaged.



Physical Activity

- Eating a balanced diet is crucial to reducing fatigue
- Avoid eating processed food, unhealthy fats, and refined carbohydrates

Resources:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/nutrition-for-kids/art-20049335>

<https://www.nutritionist-resource.org.uk/articles/tiredness.html#whatisonutritionfortiredness>

<https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.74S2001>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5412156/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5016058/>