



Understanding Fatigue with Multiple Myeloma

In this article, you'll learn how multiple myeloma (MM) can cause fatigue (tiredness), how you can recognize this symptom, and the steps you can take to manage it.

WHY IT'S HELPFUL

By understanding fatigue and its causes, you can learn to be patient with yourself when you don't have as much energy as you'd like. Once you are aware of the symptoms of fatigue, you can speak to your healthcare team about how to cope with this condition and take steps to help address it.

KEY POINTS

1. MM can cause a reduction in red blood cells, which carry oxygen to your body, leading to a condition called anemia
2. Anemia can cause fatigue (extreme tiredness) and other symptoms
3. Fatigue can also be caused by overworked kidneys and by some MM treatments
4. It's important to recognize the symptoms of fatigue and to report those symptoms to your healthcare team
5. Your healthcare team may be able to help you manage your symptoms of fatigue

UNDERSTANDING HOW MULTIPLE MYELOMA CAUSES FATIGUE

Multiple myeloma (MM) is cancer of a type of immune cell called a plasma cell, which is made in your bone marrow (the tissue inside your bones). When you have MM, the malignant (cancerous) myeloma cells grow and multiply within your bone marrow. They overcrowd the tissue space, leaving no room for your healthy cells to grow.

Red blood cells are one type of healthy cells that get crowded out by MM. Red blood cells carry oxygen to every part of your body. When there are not enough red blood cells, your body does not get enough oxygen. This can result in a condition called **anemia**, which can cause fatigue (extreme tiredness) and other symptoms.

MM can also put a strain on your kidneys, which can worsen fatigue. And some treatments for MM can also cause fatigue.

RECOGNIZING THE SYMPTOMS OF FATIGUE

Fatigue can often be managed, and the first step is recognizing its symptoms. When you are fatigued, you may feel:

- A lack of energy
- More confused than normal
- Short of breath
- Sleepy



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- Tired even after sleeping
- Too tired to do normal activities
- Even too tired to take care of your appearance

Ask your healthcare team how you can keep track of your fatigue. And be sure to share how tired you feel and how that affects you every day.

MANAGING THE SYMPTOMS OF FATIGUE

Here are some tips for managing fatigue that you may want to discuss with your healthcare team:

- Ask your family and friends for help with activities that are hard for you
- Perform your daily activities when you have the most energy
- Perform exercises that can help you raise your energy level
- Try to eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day
- Drink plenty of water throughout the day

Your healthcare team may have additional suggestions. And you may want to ask about getting support from additional healthcare professionals, such as a physical therapist or dietician. Just remember — you are part of the team. Always work together to best manage your symptoms.

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