

Managing Post-Stroke Fatigue

Encouragement, Support & Advice for Stroke Survivors

What is post-stroke fatigue?

Everyone feels tired sometimes but it is usually from a very busy day or lack of sleep. **Post-stroke fatigue** is the tiredness you feel after a stroke. It is different than regular fatigue and is considered one of the most common side effects of stroke. You may feel a lack of energy or strength and feel constantly weary or tired. Post-stroke fatigue does not always improve with rest and is not necessarily related to how busy or active you have been.

How common is post stroke fatigue?

You will most likely experience fatigue shortly after your stroke. According to the American Stroke Association, research has shown “up to 70 percent (70 out of 100) survivors experience fatigue that includes overwhelming physical or mental tiredness or exhaustion”.

What are the symptoms of post-stroke fatigue?

The symptoms of post-stroke fatigue can include:

- Difficulty with self-control, emotions and memory
- Feeling tired even after a good night’s sleep
- Feeling like your symptoms never seem to get better
- Feeling tired when you perform a task requiring physical or mental focus
- Experiencing fatigue that occurs without warning and makes it harder to do routine daily activities as well as social or work activities.

What factors can affect my level of fatigue after a stroke?

1. **Depression.** You may feel tired because of depression which is very common after a stroke.

2. **Sleep.** Irregular sleep cycles and disrupted sleep is also common after stroke.
3. **Medications.** Some medications may make you more tired than usual.
4. **Post-stroke affects.** Physical symptoms such as upper limb weakness or paralysis (unable to move limbs) can mean that movement and activities of daily living require more energy.
5. **Pain.** If you are experiencing pain after your stroke it requires energy to cope.

How can I manage post-stroke fatigue?

- Sit for as many activities as possible.
- Allow yourself more time for each activity.
- Consider the best time of day for each activity.
- Prioritize your daily activities and eliminate any unnecessary tasks.
- Take frequent rests. Rest before getting too tired or over-fatigued.
- Take your time when doing activities.
- Start small and increase the number of tasks you do.
- Pre-plan your daily activities so you can spread out energy-consuming tasks.
- Communicate with others when you are feeling fatigued.
- Listen to what your body is telling you. You are the expert on how you feel.

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