

Managing symptoms in pancreatic cancer: Fatigue

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Poll – bar chart

1. How do you rate your **knowledge** around **assessing for fatigue**?
 - Poor
 - Fair
 - Good

2. How would you rate your **knowledge** around **supporting your patients to manage fatigue**?
 - Poor
 - Fair
 - Good





**It's a roller
coaster
ride!**



The evidence - in Summary.....

- **Screen** for presence and severity for fatigue
- Use self reporting tools capturing **subjective experience** of fatigue
- **Regular screening** throughout their journey
- Assess and treat contributing factors
- Interdisciplinary approach
- Refer to appropriate **specialist** or **supportive care professional** re fatigue from diagnosis to end of life
- Enable interventions to be tailored to the individual needs of the patient and carers



The Concerns Checklist

Concerns Checklist – Identifying Your Concerns

Patient's name or label

Key worker: _____

Date: _____

Contact number: _____

This self-assessment is optional; however, it will help us understand the concerns and feelings you have. It will also help us identify any information and support you may need.

If any of the problems listed have caused you concern recently and you wish to discuss them with a key worker, **please score the concern from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest.** Leave the box blank if it doesn't apply to you, or you don't want to discuss it now.

Key worker to complete

- ☐ Copy given to patient.
- ☐ Copy to be sent to GP

Physical concerns

- ☐ Breathing difficulties
- ☐ Passing urine
- ☐ Constipation
- ☐ Diarrhoea
- ☒ Eating, appetite or taste
- ☒ Indigestion
- ☒ Swallowing
- ☐ Cough
- ☐ Sore or dry mouth or ulcers
- ☐ Nausea or vomiting
- ☒ Tired, exhausted or fatigued
- ☐ Swelling
- ☐ High temperature or fever
- ☒ Moving around (walking)
- ☐ Tingling in hands or feet
- ☒ Pain or discomfort
- ☐ Hot flushes or sweating
- ☐ Dry, itchy, or sore skin
- ☒ Changes in weight
- ☐ Wound care
- ☒ Memory or concentration
- ☐ Sight or hearing
- ☐ Speech or voice problems
- ☐ My appearance
- ☒ Sleep problems

☐ I have questions about my diagnosis, treatment, or effects.

- ☒ Sex, intimacy or fertility
- ☐ Other medical conditions

Practical concerns

- ☒ Taking care of others.
- ☒ Work or education
- ☐ Money or finance
- ☐ Travel
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Transport or parking
- ☒ Talking or being understood
- ☒ Laundry or housework
- ☒ Grocery shopping
- ☒ Washing and dressing
- ☒ Preparing meals or drinks
- ☐ Pets
- ☐ Difficulty making plans.
- ☐ Smoking cessation
- ☐ Problems with alcohol or drugs
- ☐ My medication

Emotional concerns

- ☐ Uncertainty
- ☒ Loss of interest in activities
- ☒ Unable to express feelings
- ☒ Thinking about the future
- ☐ Regret about the past
- ☐ Anger or frustration

- ☐ Loneliness or isolation
- ☒ Sadness or depression
- ☐ Hopelessness
- ☒ Guilt
- ☒ Worry, fear, or anxiety.
- ☒ Independence

Family or relationship concerns

- ☒ Partner
- ☒ Children
- ☒ Other relatives or friends
- ☒ Person who looks after me
- ☒ Person who I look after

Spiritual concerns

- ☐ Faith or spirituality
- ☐ Meaning or purpose of life
- ☐ Feeling at odds with my culture, beliefs or values

Information or support

- ☒ Exercise and activity
- ☒ Diet and nutrition
- ☐ Complementary therapies
- ☐ Planning for my future priorities
- ☐ Making a will or legal advice
- ☒ Health and wellbeing
- ☐ Patient or care support group
- ☐ Managing my symptoms
- ☐ Sun protection



Guidelines

- VAS- Scoring 0-3 / mild = education and written information

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

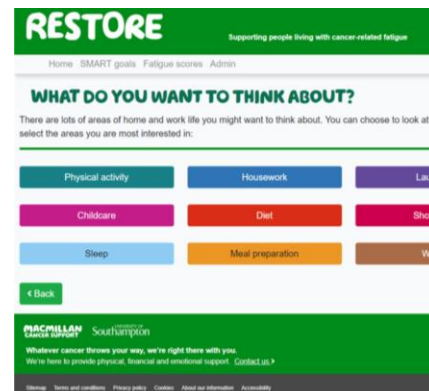
- **Educate** patients about fatigue at **beginning** of treatment **before onset of symptoms** and at regular intervals **during** and **following** treatment
- **Educational** interventions have a significant impact on self management



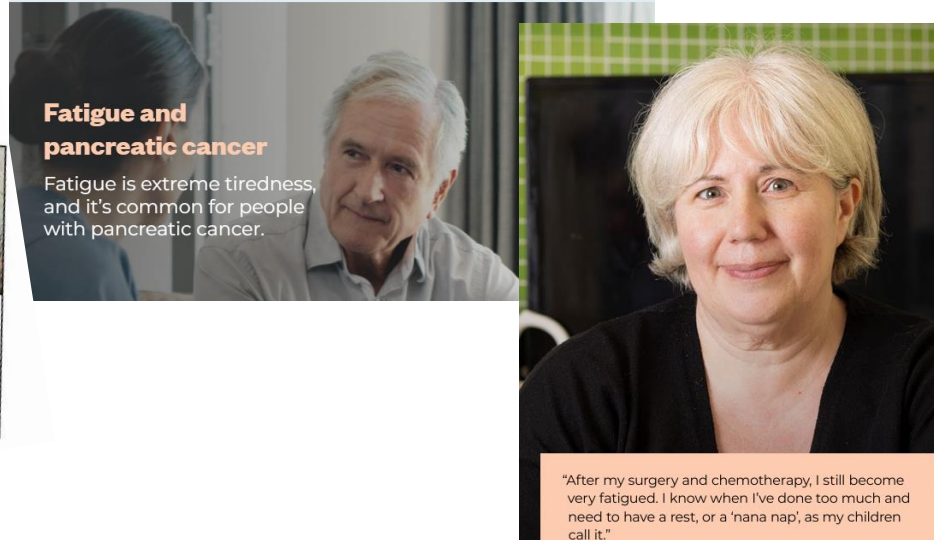
Education & resources



Coping with fatigue (tiredness)



[Back to Managing symptoms and side effects](#)



Watch our video about managing fatigue

Our specialist nurse, Jeni, explains how fatigue can affect people with pancreatic cancer and how it can be managed. Becki, Mark and Sharon share their experiences of fatigue.

[Watch our video](#)

Do you have problems digesting your food?

The pancreas makes enzymes which help to break down food. This is part of digestion. Pancreatic cancer and surgery to remove the cancer can cause problems with digestion.

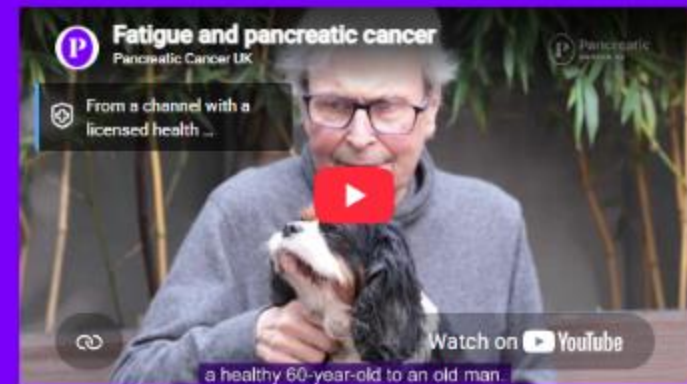
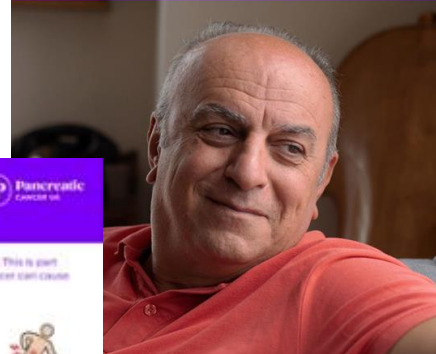
You might get some of these symptoms:

- Loss of your appetite
- Feeling full or bloated
- Feeling sick
- Indigestion or heartburn
- Feeling full or bloated
- Feeling sick
- Frequent runny poo (stools)
- Finding it harder to eat (dysphagia)
- Stools that are pale, oily, floating or smelly
- Belly pain or discomfort
- Feeling or wind
- Feeling sick or vomiting

If you have pancreatic cancer and have these symptoms, you may need to take pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT). This replaces the enzymes your pancreas normally makes. You take PERT when you eat. It helps digest your food. Common brands are Creon®, PancreoPac® and PancreoV®. Your doctor can prescribe them.

If you have any problems with digestion or questions about PERT, speak to your doctor.

Fatigue and pancreatic cancer



Guidelines

- VAS – Scoring 4-10 / moderate to severe

0 1 2 3 **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**

- Recommend a referral for specialist management of fatigue and
- ‘focused (Total) history’
- Education
- Counselling
- Fatigue Management



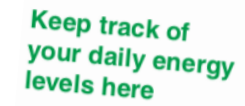
Focused History



- History of fatigue
- Pattern of fatigue
- Symptoms - physical, psychological and emotional
- Lifestyle factors
- Impact of function
- Behaviour response to fatigue
- Emotional distress
- Diet
- Current disease status
- Medication and other treatments
- Sleep
- Cognitive
- Family, social, vocational life



Managing your Fatigue Daily Activity Diary

[illegible]

MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT



The Christie 
NHS Foundation Trust

Fatigue Management is



- **Energy Conservation** – goal setting, planning, prioritising, use of diaries, compensation
- **Sleep management** and relaxation / mindfulness
- **Equipment** and adaptations
- **Meaningful, purposeful activities** including distraction and vocational rehab
- **Cognitive strategies** – post-it's, diaries, alarms
- **Education** and counselling – including talking and sharing worries
- **Exercise** and **physical activity**
- **Anxiety** and **Stress** management
- **Psychological Therapy** including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- **Complementary therapies**
- **Nutritional support** and advice



A strategy to help manage fatigue is 'Energy Conservation'

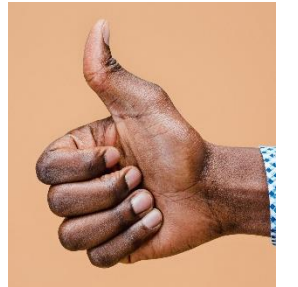
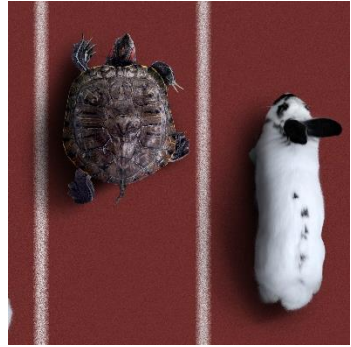


- It's about using the energy levels available as wisely as possible – the energy bank
- It's a common-sense approach and is not rocket science



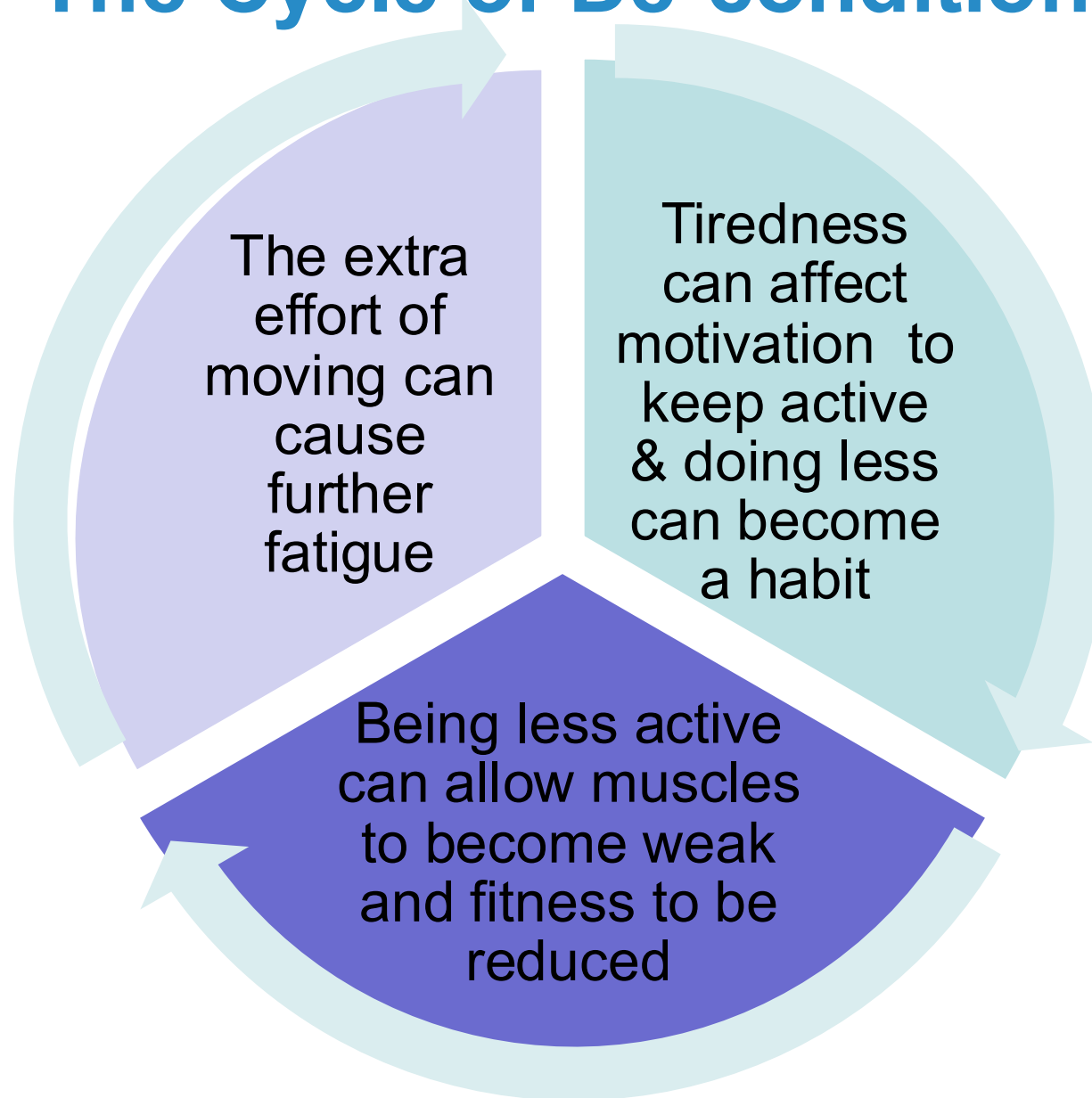
The 5 P's of Energy Conservation!!!

- **Pacing** – grade activities as **red**, **yellow**, **green** or **blue** depending on energy needed for each, avoid boom and bust / all or nothing days
- **Prioritising** – identify what is important and do that first,   have a 'have-to-do' / 'would-like-to-do' list
- **Positioning** – avoid bending, twisting, holding positions for long periods as it takes more energy, sit rather than stand, pull rather than lift
- **Permission** – give permission to 'say no', use equipment, rest, ask for help, delegate – don't feel guilty
- **Planning** – plan the day and week mixing activities that need lots of energy with those that do not need as much energy, plan hard activities when most energised, add rest and relaxation into each day



Exercise and Activity

The Cycle of De-conditioning

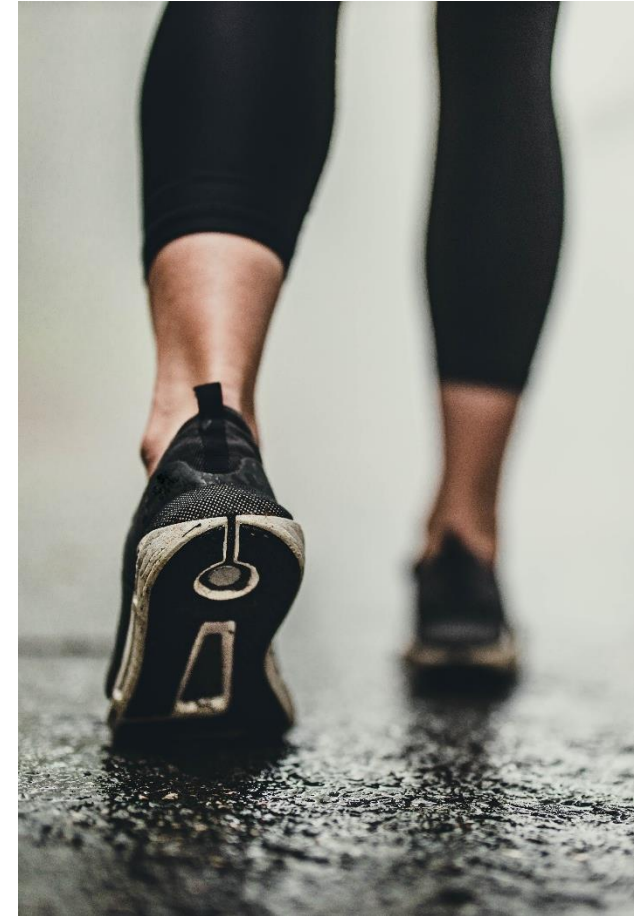


Pancreatic cancer-related fatigue is often multifactorial and associated with:

- Muscle wasting and cachexia
- Reduced cardiorespiratory fitness
- Chemotherapy side effects
- Inactivity and deconditioning

Exercise can help by:

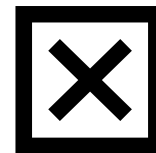
- Maintaining or improving muscle strength
- Improving aerobic capacity
- Reducing physical deconditioning
- Supporting psychological wellbeing and self-efficacy



Goal setting to manage fatigue

- Ask to think what's important to them
- Set daily and weekly goals to help increase activity
- Goals can help to motivate if meaningful to that person
- 'How sure are they that they will achieve this goal?'

• 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



• 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Anxiety and Stress Management

The benefits of relaxation are:

- Improves energy levels
- Leaves feeling refreshed
- Makes more mentally alert
- Rests the nervous system
- Optimises functional abilities
- Can help to prepare for sleep
- Useful links:
 - Donothing.co - Mindfulness advice including a 3 min mindful breathing exercise
 - AfterThoughts podcast – looks at life beyond cancer
 - Maggie's Relaxation and Breathing Exercises – a guided five sense meditation



Tips to improve sleep

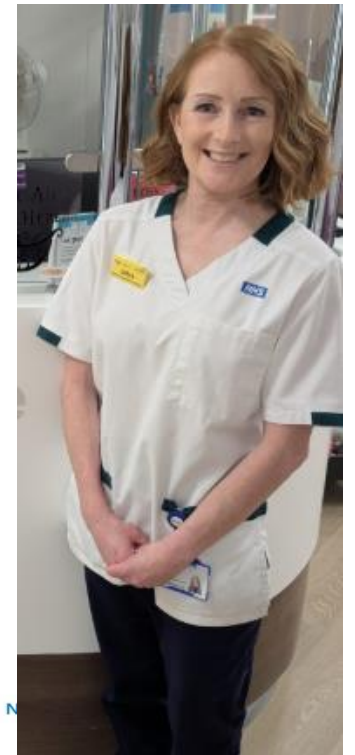


- Build sleep pressure -
 - sunlight,
 - exercise / activity,
 - avoid naps in the day especially early evening - limit it to 60 mins if you must,
 - stick to a sleep schedule / routine
 - Manage stress and worry – relaxation and mindfulness
- Two hour rule – avoid
 - avoid exercise / activity, caffeine, spicy foods, alcohol and stress / worry, screens / blue light
- Look at your Sleep Environment – dark room, temp 16-18 degrees, comfortable pillows, mattress and duvet



X5 Take Away Messages

1. Establish presence of fatigue and severity – 0-10 scale
2. 0 – 3 = education and 4-10 = Fatigue Management
3. Energy Conservation – 5 P's and equipment
4. Exercise / activity – setting goals might help
5. Involve the MDT – Occupational Therapy, Physio, Complementary Therapy, Nurses, Dietitian



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References and Bibliography

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