



Information about traumatic brain injury

Post-traumatic Fatigue

Fatigue is one of the most common problems encountered after a traumatic brain injury (TBI). People experiencing fatigue often lack the physical and/or mental energy needed for daily activities.

**ARE
YOU....
Tired?
Worn out?
Exhausted?**

What Causes Fatigue?

Fatigue may result from multiple causes including medical problems, medications, increased physical and cognitive demands, emotional stress and decreased endurance. Some medical conditions are known to cause or increase fatigue. For example:

- Depression
- Seasonal allergies
- Sleep deprivation
- Neuroendocrine dysfunction (e.g. thyroid, diabetes, growth hormone, sex hormones, electrolyte deficiency)
- Respiratory or cardiac problems
- Headaches
- Inactivity
- Vitamin deficiency
- Stress/over-commitment

Medications Can Cause Fatigue

Medications commonly used after TBI that may cause or increase fatigue include:

- Clonidine
- Beta Blockers
- Phenytoin (Dilantin)
- Phenobarbital
- Lorazepam
- Muscle Relaxers
- Pain Medications
- Metoclopramide (Reglan)
- Promethazine (Phenergan)

Can Medication Help?

Medications that may reduce fatigue include:

- Amantadine
- Methylphenidate
- Modafinil



Ideas to Reduce Fatigue

Observe Your Situation

- Recognize what triggers or improves your fatigue
- Learn to identify the early signs of your fatigue

Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle

- Get off the couch
- Stop smoking
- Exercise daily
- Eat a healthy diet
- Establish a regular sleep pattern

Improve Time Management

- Plan and follow a daily schedule
- Prioritize activities
- Get stressful or difficult things done first
- Avoid over-scheduling
- Stop activity before becoming tired

Increase Stamina

- Develop strategies to conserve energy - plan regular rest breaks, group similar activities together
- Pace yourself to gradually resume your schedule
- Use adaptive equipment if needed
- Engage in regular aerobic exercise

Talk to Your Doctor

- Discuss medical and/or physical problems that may be causing the fatigue
- Review all current medications
- Consider treatment for depression if present
- Test for neuroendocrine deficiencies

Would you like to tell us your story?

Everyone's experience with fatigue is different. If you want to share your story with us, please send a **brief description of your experience with fatigue**. Include the cause and year of the TBI and your relationship to the person with TBI (self, spouse, friend, etc), the impact of fatigue, and the strategies or medications that have helped.

The *Heads Up* newsletter is free!

Contact us to request a newsletter, provide change of address or to submit article ideas.

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Our mission: *Improve TBI care and outcomes through research, education and services.*

The staff of *Heads Up* welcome your comments!

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