

How to prevent tiredness or fatigue caused by your medicines

Your health care provider prescribed a medicine for you that might make you feel tired or fatigued. Here are some important things to keep in mind when taking this medicine:

- Many medicines can cause you to feel tired or fatigued when you take them. These include some prescribed medicines (such as those for pain and nausea) and some over-the-counter medicines (such as antihistamines). In many cases, the tiredness and fatigue will go away in 3 to 7 days after you start the medicine or increase your dose.
- Some side effects caused by these medicines can be dangerous.
 - Don't drive or operate heavy machinery while taking medicines that cause you to feel tired or fatigued. Check the medicine bottle and read the instruction sheet to see if your medicine causes these side effects.
 - Be careful when you get up from sleeping. You might be at greater risk of falling when taking these medicines. Turn the lights on before walking to the bathroom or other areas in the middle of the night.
- Using products with caffeine can help lessen tiredness and fatigue. Don't take over-the-counter caffeine products, such as NoDoz, without first talking with your provider or the consulting nurse.

Call your provider or the consulting nurse right away if you have any of the following:

- Excessive tiredness and you're unable to stay awake or have trouble waking up from sleep.
- Tiredness or fatigue that gets worse.
- Sleeping more than 10 hours a day, especially if you feel you need to sleep during the day.
- Slurred speech, stumbling, confusion, or feeling drunk.
- You take an extra dose of pain medicine by accident.

After clinic hours, call the Consulting Nurse Service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 1-800-297-6877.

Here are some things that may help if you feel tired or fatigued:

1. Drink small amounts of caffeinated beverages, like coffee, tea or colas.
2. Get some physical activity. Go outside for a quick walk or do another type of physical activity that you like to do.
3. Take several deep breaths when you start feeling tired or fatigued.

Using medicines to treat and prevent tiredness and fatigue:

1. Don't take over-the-counter products, such as NoDoz, unless your provider says it's OK.
2. If you're taking short-acting pain medicines, such as hydrocodone-acetaminophen or oxycodone-acetaminophen, and feel tired or fatigued within 1 to 2 hours of taking the medicine, talk to your provider about switching to a long-acting time-release pain medicine.

These medicines may be less likely to cause tiredness and fatigue.

3. Tiredness and fatigue can be a sign that you're receiving too much pain medicine. Talk to your provider to see if this may be the case for you and how to safely lower the amount you're taking.
4. In rare situations, your provider can prescribe medicines to offset the feelings of tiredness and fatigue when other options either don't work or aren't good choices for you.
5. If you feel that the pain medicine is causing you to be too tired or fatigued, call your provider to talk about other options for managing your pain.
6. Check with your provider, nurse, or pharmacist before taking any herbal, naturopathic or homeopathic products for tiredness or fatigue. We want to make sure there are no drug interactions or serious side effects that could happen.