

The ROYAL MARSDEN

NHS Foundation Trust

Fatigue Management Practical guidance

To support the poster 'Feeling fatigued?'

Radiotherapy

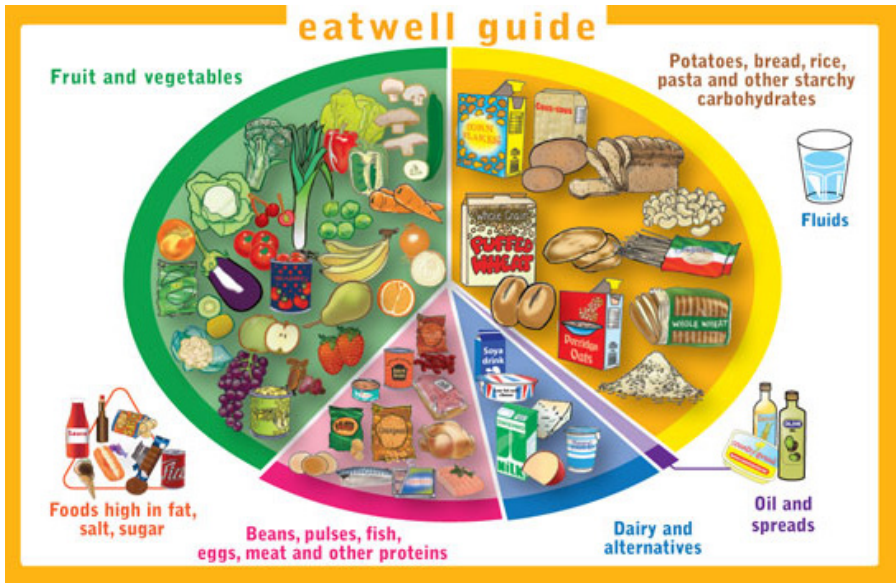
Patient Information



NHS

Nutrition and hydration

Poor nutrition and hydration can cause fatigue (tiredness). To manage this, we recommend you follow the NHS Eatwell guidance and refer to The Royal Marsden booklet *Eating well when you have cancer*.



Sleep

Getting a good night's sleep can be difficult. To support a peaceful night's sleep we advise you:

- Limit daytime naps to 45 minutes
- Set a regular bedtime
- Ensure you have a comfortable, calm and quiet environment to sleep in
- Use relaxation techniques such as listening to music and enjoying a bath.

We also recommend you avoid:

- Drinking caffeine (coffee, tea, cola) in the evening
- Drinking too much alcohol before bed
- Bright screens (such as TV, computer, mobile) for one hour before bed
- Extra time in bed (when not sleeping); associate bed with sleep.

Physical activity

Being physically active can reduce fatigue. Start with a gentle activity such as walking, swimming, pilates, housework or gardening and gradually increase the amount you do. Always seek medical advice before starting something new.

Please refer to the *Macmillan Move More* pack or ask for a referral to physiotherapy.



Relaxation

Stress and anxiety can reduce your appetite and energy and make it hard to sleep. You may find this simple relaxation exercise helpful:

- Imagine you are blowing a candle flame
- Make the flame flicker, do not blow it out
- Blow gently and slowly
- Relax your neck and shoulders
- Relax your hands and jaw.

The 5 P's

Prioritising: Make a list of tasks for the day/week. For each task ask: Does it need to be done? Do you want to it? Can it be delayed? Can it be delegated to someone else?

Pacing: Avoid rushing; try to keep a moderate, sustainable pace. Plan rests as part of the daily routine.

Planning: Choose your best time of day for each activity. Do not do all your tiring activities in one go. Break larger tasks down into smaller stages.

Posture: Do not sit or stand in the same position for too long. Keep frequently used items in easy reach to avoid repeated bending and twisting movements.

Permission: Allow for bad days. Be kind to yourself, instead of 'I must...' and 'I ought...', try 'I wish to...' and 'I choose to...'

For more guidance

Please speak to the healthcare professional looking after you. This could include your Radiographer, Doctor or Clinical Nurse Specialist. They can provide further guidance and if required

refer you for additional support from Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy or Psychological Support services.

Further support

You may also find the following online information useful:

www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide/

www.royalmarsden.nhs.uk/your-care/living-and-beyond-cancer/eating-well

www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/treatment/preparing-for-treatment/eating-well-and-keeping-active

www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/impacts-of-cancer/tiredness

Occupational Therapy

The Royal Marsden Occupational Therapy department takes part in the Health & Well Being Events run at this hospital where we discuss fatigue and relaxation.

If you would like an individual appointment, please contact:

020 8661 3090 (Sutton) or 020 7808 2830 (Chelsea)

References

This booklet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available, and represents an accumulation of expert opinion and professional interpretation. Details of the references used in writing this booklet are available on request from:

The Royal Marsden Help Centre

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No conflicts of interest were declared in the production of this booklet. Should you require information in an alternative format, please contact The Royal Marsden Help Centre.

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