



Let's Talk About Feeling Tired After Stroke

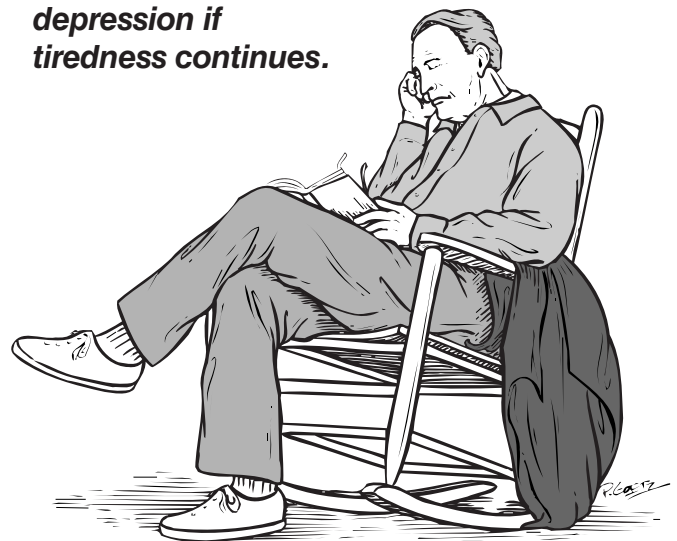
Why am I so tired?

After a stroke, almost everyone complains of feeling tired at some point. While fatigue is common at first, you'll probably start feeling less tired after a few months. For some people, tiredness may continue for years after a stroke, but they usually find ways to make the most of the energy they have.

It's important to pinpoint what's causing you to be tired. When you know what's causing your tiredness, you can take action to manage it. You should consult with your healthcare provider to rule out any medical conditions that might cause tiredness or make it worse. You may feel tired after a stroke for four major reasons:

- **You have less energy than before.** This can be because of sleeping poorly, not getting enough exercise, poor nutrition or the side effects of medicine.
- **You have as much energy as before, but you're using it differently.** Because of the effects of your stroke, many things, like dressing, talking or walking, take a lot more effort. Changes in thinking and memory take more concentration. You have to stay "on alert" all the time — and this takes energy.

- **You also may feel more tired due to emotional rather than physical changes.** Coping with frustration, anxiety, anger and sadness can be draining. Depressed feelings are common after a stroke. Often loss of energy, interest or enthusiasm occurs along with a depressed mood.
- **Clinical depression is a treatable illness that happens to many stroke survivors.** Symptoms include significant lack of energy, lack of motivation, and problems concentrating or finding enjoyment in anything. **Talk to your doctor about an evaluation for clinical depression if tiredness continues.**



How can I increase my energy?

- **Tell your doctor how you feel and make sure you have had an up-to-date physical.** Besides evaluating any medical reasons for your tiredness, your doctor also may check to see if your fatigue could be a side effect of your medication.
- **Celebrate your successes.** Give yourself credit when you accomplish something. Look at your progress, not at what's left to be done.
- **Try naps, or schedule rest periods throughout the day.** Rest as long as you need to feel refreshed.

How can I increase my energy? (continued)

- **Learn to relax.** Sometimes the harder you try to do something, the harder it is to do. You become tense, anxious and frustrated. All this takes more energy. Being relaxed lets you use your energy more efficiently.
- **Every day do something you enjoy.** A positive attitude or experience helps a lot to boost energy levels.
- **Physical activity is important.** With permission from your doctor, consider joining a health and wellness program.






How can I learn more?

- Talk to your doctor, nurse or other healthcare professionals. Ask about other stroke topics. This is one of many *Let's Talk About Stroke* fact sheets available.
- For more information on stroke, or to receive additional fact sheets, call the American Stroke Association at 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit us online at StrokeAssociation.org.
- If you or someone you know has had a stroke, call the American

Stroke Association's "Warmline" at 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653), and:

- ✓ Speak with other stroke survivors and caregivers, trained to answer your questions and offer support
- ✓ Get information on stroke support groups in your area
- ✓ Sign up to get *Stroke Connection Magazine*, a free publication for stroke survivors and caregivers

What are the Warning Signs of Stroke?

-  **Sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body**
-  **Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding**
-  **Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes**
-  **Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination**
-  **Sudden, severe headaches with no known cause**



Learn to recognize a stroke. *Because time lost is brain lost.*

Today there are treatments that can reduce the risk of damage from the most common type of stroke, but only if you get help quickly — within 3 hours of your first symptoms.

Call 9-1-1 immediately if you experience these warning signs!

Do you have questions for your doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider:

What can I do to decrease my tiredness?

Could clinical depression be causing my tiredness?

Are the medicines I take causing my fatigue?

The statistics in this kit were up to date at publication. For the latest statistics, see the Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Update at americanheart.org/statistics.

The American Stroke Association is a division of the American Heart Association. Your contributions will support research and educational programs that help reduce disability and death from stroke.

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