

Specializing in Women's and Men's Health

Newsletter

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CANCER-RELATED FATIGUE

BY: KIMBERLEE SULLIVAN, PT, DPT, WCS, BCB-PMD

Cancer-related fatigue is one of the most common side effects of cancer and its treatment. It is not predictable by tumor type, treatment, or stage of illness. It comes on suddenly, does not result from activity or exertion, and is not relieved by rest or sleep.

There are a several tools that you can utilize in order to manage cancer-related fatigue. You should focus on energy conservation by planning ahead and organizing your work. Make sure to schedule rest and pace yourself with your activities. Practice proper body mechanics and limit work that requires reaching over your head and activities that increase muscle tension. Also avoid extreme temperatures, like living in Central Texas during the Summer of 2011!

Nutrition is another important factor in managing cancer-related fatigue. You should make sure to meet your basic calorie needs (2,000 to 2,500 calories a day) and include protein in your diet (65-80 grams a day). Drink plenty of fluids (12 ounces) and make sure that you are getting enough Vitamins. A daily multi-vitamin should be appropriate, but if you need more assistance please make an appointment with a dietician who specializes in cancer.

As a physical therapist, I cannot forget exercise. You should exercise for 15 to 30 minutes 3 to 5 days per week. The goal would be 50 to 70% of maximum heart rate. In order to achieve this, make sure that the exercise is aerobic in nature such as walking, swimming and biking. To make your work outs well rounded, include stretching such as yoga and a resistive training program such as working with weights or bands.

Last but not least, stress management. Being diagnosed with cancer is difficult and you might need to adjust your expectations. You should incorporate rest time and relaxation techniques in your daily schedule. Most importantly, allow your loved ones to support you and help them to understand your needs. It is okay to ask for help.

Ice vs. Heat

Warm and cool compresses are good methods for soothing muscles aches and sprains. Both are analgesics, so should you grab a bag of frozen vegetables or a heating pad?

The application will depend on the injury. Ice is for acute pain or injuries that happen quickly, such as a sprained ankle or strained hamstring. Cold is stimulating and it causes superficial blood vessels to constrict and minimizes swelling and inflammation. Heat is appropriate for areas of chronic pain, such lower back and abdominal pain. Warm applications relax tissue and cause blood vessels to dilate, therefore allowing metabolic waste to flush from the tissue.

The two modalities can also be used together to relieve joint and muscle stiffness and is useful for managing headache pain. Alternating hot and cold improves elimination, decreases inflammation, and stimulates circulation. Contrasting treatment should always start with heat for approximately three minutes, then alternating to cold for approximately one minute. Continue alternating between hot and cold treatment 3-4 times. Always end with cold treatment, unless treating rheumatoid arthritis, which should always end with a heat application.

Tune In to Pelvic Zen

This month Angela Dobinsky, PT will be discussing "**Interstitial Cystitis and Pelvic Pain**" on Tuesday, December 6th at 5:30pm CST. To access the show, please follow: www.blogtalkradio.com/pelviczen.



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Promoting Pelvic Floor Wellness in Men and Women

Tuesday, December 6th:

"Interstitial Cystitis and Pelvic Pain"

www.blogtalkradio.com/pelviczen

Austin Women's Pelvic Pain Support Group:

Next support group meets at Sullivan Physical Therapy on Tuesday, December 6th at 6pm.
This group will be Open Discussion

Pregnancy Series Class:

Speaker: Rachel Cortell, LMT, CPMT

"Your Body After Baby"

Free class for pregnant and postpartum women held at Sullivan Physical Therapy on Wednesday, December 21st at 6pm.
Limited to 10 attendees. Please RSVP to rachel@sullivanphysicaltherapy.com by 12/19/11.