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Cancer Fatigue

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Fatigue, a common and debilitating side effect of cancer and its treatments, is very real. Not only is this fatigue real, but it is also often unlike “normal” fatigue, which can usually be relieved by rest. Because few are aware of this distinction, it may be hard for patients, their families, and others with whom cancer patients have dealings, to accept the reality of cancer fatigue. And this, according to the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), “...can lead to communication problems, resentment, and feelings of guilt”¹.

Those of us who have experienced typical fatigue at one time or another, know how easily it undermines our ability to go about our business. How, then, can cancer patients get through the day, let alone make decisions about their care, when they experience this even more devastating form of fatigue? And how can they get those who are helping them, understand what they are going through?

Answers to these questions may be found on the website created by the ONS to build public awareness of cancer fatigue. Visitors to this site, at <http://www.cancerfatigue.org/>, will find a variety of helpful information – from general information about fatigue to tips for managing, and communicating about, it with family, healthcare professionals, and employers.□

¹ See <http://www.cancerfatigue.org/learn/article>

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