

# Empower – Menopause and Cancer Survivorship Pathway

## Managing Fatigue

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# Cancer Related Fatigue

“a distressing persistent **subjective sense of tiredness** or exhaustion that is **not proportionate to recent activity** and interferes with usual daily functioning”

*(US National Cancer Institute, 2014)*

- **Underreported and undertreated** symptom of cancer
- Experienced by up to 99% of individuals

# Today

- What is cancer related fatigue?
- Causes of cancer related fatigue
- How fatigue impacts daily activities
- Fatigue management strategies

# Cancer Related Fatigue

How would you describe your fatigue?

# Cancer Related Fatigue

Drained

Fogginess

Hit by a hammer

Like a wave  
washing over  
me

Unpredictable

Cloudiness

My brain says go,  
my body says no!

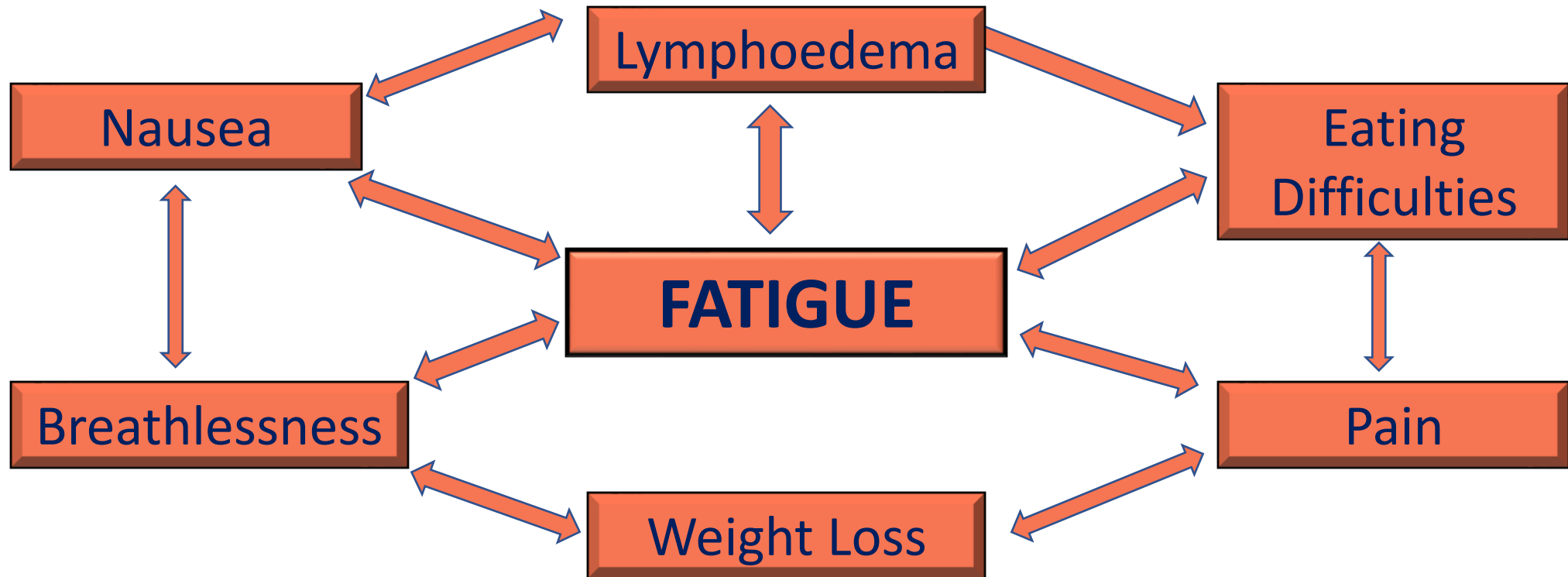
Hit by a bus

# What Causes Fatigue?

- Impact of cancer and/or treatment
  - Autoimmune response
- Medications for other symptoms
- Non-cancer related diseases
- Emotional impact of cancer diagnosis
- Disturbed sleep
- Inactivity and deconditioning



# Relationship Between Fatigue and Other Cancer Related Symptoms



# Impact of Fatigue

- Physical impact
  - Muscle weakness
  - Reduce energy/endurance
  - Reduced ability for daily activities
- Cognitive impact
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Memory difficulties
  - Difficulty multi tasking
- Emotional impact
  - Anxiety
  - Stress



# How Do I Manage Cancer Related Fatigue?

- Manage energy levels efficiently
- Sleep well
- Awareness of anxiety and stress
- Physical activity
- Resting
- Balance diet

# Energy Management



*How can you use your energy as efficiently as possible?*

# The Four P's of Energy Efficiency



# Prioritising

- What are your priorities? What do you have to do and want to do?
  - List the things you need and want to do in the week
- Can you give up certain tasks or do them less frequently?
  - How tired do you feel after each of the activities?
- Need a balance between work related and leisure activities

# Prioritising Activities

## Fatigue Diary

List the activities you carry out and rate your level of fatigue following the activity

Day	Activities Carried Out	Fatigue Scale (1-10)
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

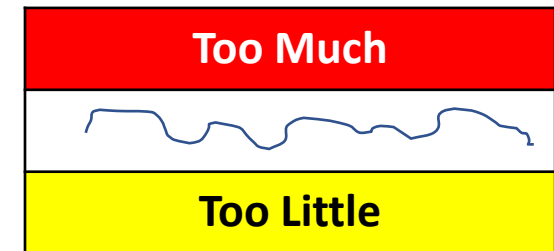
# Planning



- What is the best daytime to do an activity?
- Avoid scheduling more than one or two energy-demanding activities on the same day
- Plan ahead in the lead up to important events
- What do I need to do to complete this activity
  - Assemble necessary equipment in one place

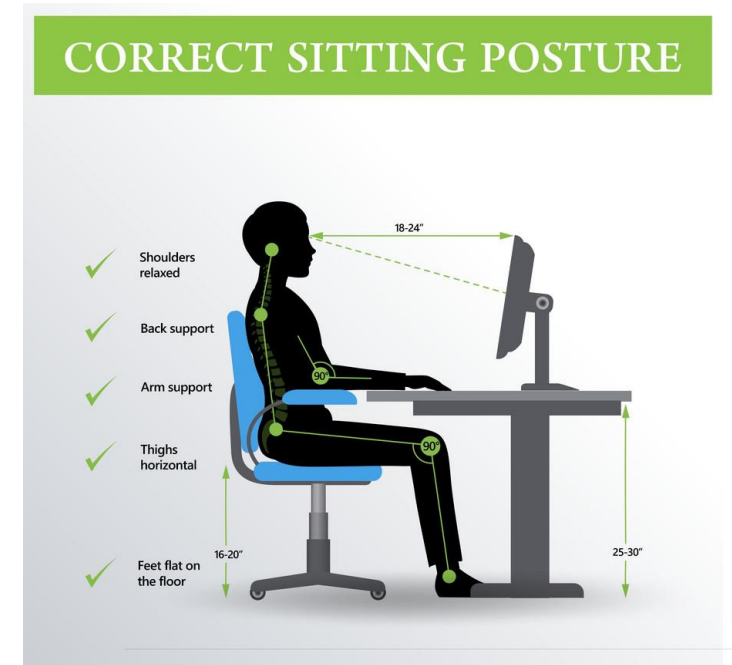
# Pacing

- Mix heavy and light jobs throughout the day
- Do demanding activities when you're at your best
- Take your time – rushing increases fatigue
- Take short breaks as needed



# Positioning

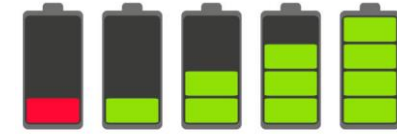
- Access your posture during tasks
- Are you sitting/standing in the best position?
- Do your activities involve excessive bending, reaching, carrying and lifting?
  - Think about how you organize your work area
- Change positions every 30 minutes



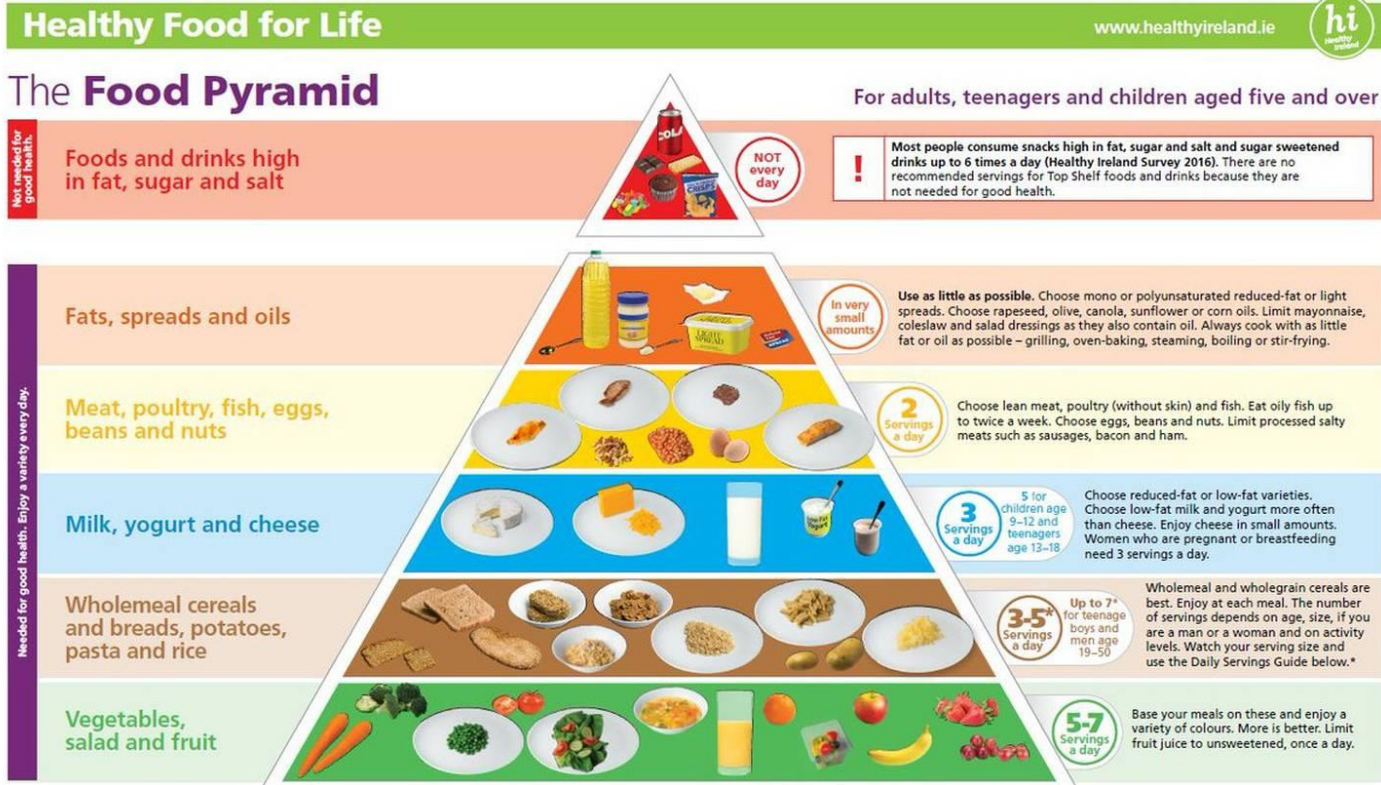


# Resting to Manage Fatigue

- Important part of fatigue management
- Taking a rest is not 'giving in' to fatigue?
  - Short and frequent rests
  - 10 to 60 minutes
- Increase rest times in lead up to big events
- Supportive armchair/touch/bed



# Diet



Consult a dietician for specific dietary advice

# Physical Activity and Fatigue

- Link between physical activity and fatigue
- National guidelines: 150 minutes moderate exercise per week
- Choose activities you enjoy doing
- Begin gradually and build it up
- Plan suitable time and place
- Exercise with others
- *Consult a physiotherapist*



# Tips to Manage Stress

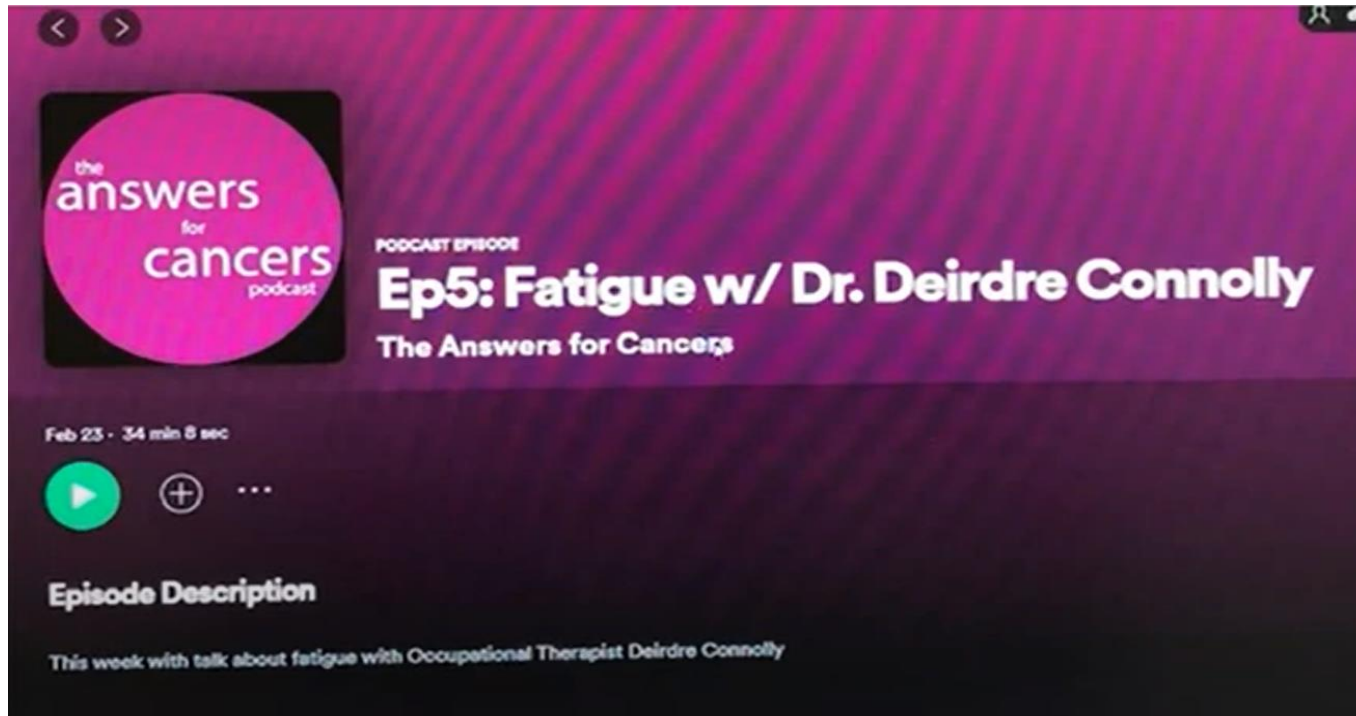
- Take control – don't think issues will 'go away' deal with problems quickly
- Make a list of stressors
  - Rank how stressful each issue is to you
  - Rank order of addressing stressors
- Talk things through with a friend or get professional help
- Eat healthily, take adequate sleep and exercise regularly
- Use relaxation Apps: Headspace, Mindfulness

# Conclusion

- Fatigue is a real and recognised symptom of cancer and a common side effect of treatment
- Fatigue is disruptive
- Small changes can make a big difference
- Acknowledge fatigue – don't fight it

**Be easy on yourself**

# Podcast – The Answer for Cancer



[The Answers for Cancers | Podcast on Spotify](#)

# Thank you!

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