

# FATIGUE IN CHILDREN

## What is Fatigue

Fatigue is a feeling of tiredness, exhaustion, or lack of energy. Your child may feel this way because of too much or not enough activity. It can also come from stress, lack of sleep, boredom, and poor diet. Many medical problems, including viral infections, can cause fatigue.

## What are the 3 types of fatigue?

**Physical** - fatigue that is pronounced physical exhaustion and reduced ability to engage in physical activities.

**Emotional** - pronounced emotional exhaustion and reduced ability to engage in emotional activities, such as empathising with or caring for others.

**Mental** - pronounced mental exhaustion and reduced ability to engage in cognitive activities, such as making decisions.

## Common Symptoms of Fatigue

- Tired sore eyes
- Having trouble getting up in the morning
- Boredom
- Losing interest in things they generally like to do
- Slow reactions
- Irritable, anxious, nervous
- Constant sleepiness
- Attention and memory issues
- Laziness
- Headaches, sore muscles, muscle weakness
- Fall asleep during the day

## Common Causes of Fatigue

- Poor sleep habits
- Pain
- Medications
- Work/Studying long hours
- Poor Diet
- Chronic Inflammation
- Too much or too little exercise
- Emotional health issues
- Medical conditions i.e. CFS and fibromyalgia, Infections (flu, Covid, pneumonia, glandular fever), Sleep Apnoea
- Inflammatory conditions (such as JIA) can affect how the body processes iron leading to iron deficiency (anaemia)

**If the fatigue lasts longer than 2 weeks a medical review is recommended.**

## What is Fatigue Syndrome?

Extreme and unexplained tiredness/fatigue which lasts for at least three months. They may also have other symptoms which make it difficult for them to play sport, socialise and go to school. Some symptoms may occur suddenly whilst others may appear gradually over months or years.

## Things to help reduce fatigue:

- Regular Exercise
- Reduce stress
- Maintain Healthy Weight
- Plenty of rest
- Varied diet of healthy foods
- Talking about it
- Drinking more water
- Listening to your body
- Limit caffeine, alcohol & junk foods

## Important Things to Remember as a Parent with a Child with Fatigue:

It is normal to feel angry, frustrated and scared when your child has been diagnosed with fatigue. It is important to reach out and talk things through with trusted friends and loved ones or the health care team, if you are feeling overwhelmed. There are a number of social media groups, support groups and organisations to join to help manage challenges and issues faced.

## Where to get help:

### Organisations:

- Emerge Australia
- Arthritis, Pain Support & ME/CFS ACT
- ACT Government Mental Health 'Mind Map Portal'
- Beyond Blue

### Virtual Support

- Lounging lizards (17-40yr olds experiencing ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia or ongoing fatiguing condition via Zoom)
- [kids-first.com.au/managing-child-fatigue-and-wellbeing](https://kids-first.com.au/managing-child-fatigue-and-wellbeing)
- Mental Health Online

### Resources

[https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact\\_sheets/Chronic\\_Fatigue\\_Syndrome/](https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Chronic_Fatigue_Syndrome/)  
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/cfs>  
<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/fatigue>

For further information contact:



[info@arthritisact.org.au](mailto:info@arthritisact.org.au)



1800 011 041  
(02) 6251 2055

Arthritis  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

pain  
support

ME  
CFS  
ACT