

Otago Community Hospice | PO Box 8002
293 North Road, Dunedin, New Zealand
Tel: 03 473 6005 | Fax: 03 473 6015
reception@otagohospice.co.nz

The family members' guide to:

MANAGING FATIGUE

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www.otagohospice.co.nz

Otago Community Hospice has unfenced boundaries onto Lindsay Creek and North Road. Please be aware of associated hazards.

Reviewed: 1 September 2013



carers



who are carers?

A carer is a person who provides support and care for another person. Carers are usually close family members, whanau or friends. Care can be emotional or physical, and may include support with daily activities (bathing, dressing), help with household tasks (cleaning, cooking), or simply being available to listen and to talk.

It can be one of the greatest honours to care for a loved one at the end of their life.

Care giving is a special and rewarding role, but it is also hard work. It is important to take care of yourself and accept help and support from others.

other useful contacts

Carers Society Otago:

Phone: (03) 471 6204
Email: carerssociety@
pconnect.co.nz

Heart Foundation:

Phone: (03) 477 3999
Email: marys@nhf.org.nz

Cancer Society:

Phone: (03) 477 7447
Email: admin@cansoc.org.nz

Parkinson's Otago:

Phone: (03) 455 7260
Email:
otagofo@parkinsons.org.nz

Caring for Carers

www.caringforcarers.org.nz/
Phone: (03) 386 1863

Carers New Zealand:

www.carers.net.nz/
Phone: 0800 777 797

Otago Stroke Foundation:

Phone: (03) 471 6175
Email: otagestroke@hotmail.com

Age Concern Otago:

Phone: (03) 477 1040
Email: ann@ageconcernotago.co.nz

COPD / Emphysema Support Group:

Phone: (03) 471 6167
Email: otagoastma@xtra.co.nz

Dunedin Public Libraries:

Phone: (03) 477 3690
Email: library@dcc.govt.nz

Multiple Sclerosis Foundation:

Phone: (03) 455 5894
Email: msadmin@actrix.co.nz

Diabetes Society

Phone: (03) 474 0240



handy tips

- Try to maintain an upright posture, and use both sides of your body equally during tasks. This will reduce pain and tiredness, and reduce the chance of injury.
- Sit while doing tasks such as folding washing or chopping vegetables to conserve your energy (standing uses 25% more energy).
- If grocery shopping is difficult, ask a family member to do it, or order online and have items delivered.
- Take time to relax. Relaxing means letting the body and mind relax. This may mean doing nothing and resting, rather than watching television or listening to the radio.
- Rest BEFORE becoming exhausted, regular rest will make you better at what you do.
- Alternate hard and easy tasks.
- The Hospice Social Worker is available for support.

If you need advice or support, don't hesitate to get in touch with the Otago Community Hospice team.

Phone: 03 473 6005

fatigue management

Fatigue may be defined as feeling tired or exhausted, to the point that you can't do what you normally do.

As a carer you are likely to be dealing with the fatigue which your loved one experiences as a result of their illness. However, caring for somebody else can be hard work, and its easy to wear yourself out.

There are several techniques and tips which help people manage fatigue; lessening its impact and helping them use their time on what is important to them. Some of these techniques will be explained in this booklet. This booklet is in two parts:

- The first half contains some techniques to help you manage your own fatigue as you care for your loved one in their illness.
- The second half describes ways which you as a carer can help the person you are caring for manage their fatigue.

Talk to your GP or District Nurse about fatigue, they may be able to help you manage it.

looking after yourself

Time out for yourself to re-energise and refresh your body and mind, is just as important as the care which you provide.

remember:

- You don't have to do everything yourself. Prioritise, and look at what other people can do to help out.
- Take breaks, and do something you enjoy in this time.
- Exercise and get some fresh regularly.
- Try and get enough sleep, even if you have to get it in snatches throughout the day.
- Invite friends around whose company you enjoy.
- Each day, schedule an enjoyable activity just for you.

list activities you find relaxing, to remind yourself to make time for them:

organise your environment

You can make simple changes in your environment which can save you and the person you are caring for energy.

- Put the items which you often use in convenient locations. For example, if you find yourself constantly dashing from the bathroom to the linen cupboard to get towels, then plan ahead and store a few towels in the bathroom.
- Use natural light as much as possible. Florescent and dim lighting strain the eyes and increase fatigue.
- Keep background noise to a minimum, as it can be very tiring. For example holding a conversation while television is on takes more energy.
- Keep your house at a steady comfortable temperature, or at least the most used rooms. Being too warm increases fatigue, and if a room is too cold energy is used to keep the body warm.
- Use adaptive equipment to make tasks easier. For example safely using a seat or stool while showering can save your loved one a lot of energy. Talk to the Hospice team about accessing other equipment.

pacing

The person you care for may not be able to do the activities that they want to do as a result of fatigue. Activities can be modified to allow your loved one to continue participating.

Your loved one could try:

- Saving his/her energy for activities he or she really enjoys.
- Shorten or simplifying versions of activities they enjoy. For example, if they enjoy gardening have them plant seedlings into pots rather than tending the garden.
- Divide activities in to active and restful periods. For example, do five minutes of activity, then have a five minute rest.
- Spreading activities throughout the day and allow time to rest in-between them.
- Ask for help when needed.



relaxation

Relaxation techniques help people relax and relieve stress. The trick is finding which ones work for you. Outlined below is a deep breathing technique that you may find useful.

Deep Breathing is a easy relaxation technique, which can help manage stress, boost energy, and improve sleep .

Deep steady breathing relaxes your entire body and calms your mind. It does this by increasing the oxygen to the brain as well as the body.

a simple deep breathing technique:



- Sit quietly and focus your attention on your breathing.
- Place your hands on each side of your belly button with your fingertips touching.
- Take a deep breath through your nostrils and feel your stomach rise.
- Slowly breath out through your mouth and feel your stomach fall.
- Continue breathing slowly and deeply for as long as you wish, as often as you wish. It is recommended you begin with 3 minutes and increase the time as you become more familiar with the technique.

accepting support

Accepting support is a great way to look after yourself while caring for a family member who is unwell.

There are many tasks you may be doing, which other people would be happy to help you with. Accepting support will allow you to use your time wisely and take breaks when you need them.

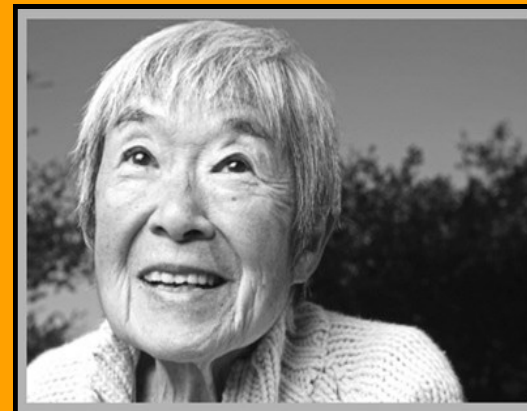
On the following pages is a table to help you prioritise chores you need to do, what others could do, and a place for you to record the support you have available.

Remember, you don't have to do everything yourself! Ask whanau and friends to help with specific tasks.



conserving energy

- Support the person you care for to decide what is most important to them, so that you can both make sure that they spend their time well.
- Discuss with your family member when they are usually feeling their best during the day and plan how to use this time. Plan visitors and activities for these times.
- Plan rest times when your family member feels they get the most tired in the day. Tell visitors not to come at these times, unplug the phone and put a sign on the door. Use an answerphone to screen calls.
- Ask visitors to ring first before visiting. If they visit while you are tired, don't feel bad asking them to leave and come back another day.



fatigue and your loved one



Fatigue may become an issue for the person you are caring for. Throughout their illness your loved one will have good and bad days. This is normal. Some days s/he may be feeling really tired and unwell, and the next day s/he may be feeling much more lively.

Fatigue in some people who are ill may develop gradually over time, and can be very unpleasant and distressing. It is seldom resolved by rest. Your support will be needed throughout these times. There are several ways in which you may be able to help the person you care for manage their fatigue.

Planning and prioritising can help you and your loved one make the most of their day.

who could I ask for support?

List the people who have offered to lend you a hand, and what they could help you with:

NAME	PHONE NUMBER	JOBS THEY COULD DO

Hospice team: (03) 473 6005

Community Care Coordinators

Support Services

Inpatient care

Night care at home

Kowahi programme—support for carers, patients and families

Other supports:

Home help - ph:

District Nurses - ph:

Meals on Wheels - ph:

General Practitioner - ph:

organising activities

A guide to help you prioritise activities and allow other people to help.

Activity	How important is this activity?	When does the activity need to be done by?	Does it need to be done by me?	Could it be done by others? Who?	Does my loved one mind the activity being performed by someone else?	<u>OUTCOME:</u> Who will do this activity?
<u>EXAMPLE:</u> Cooking dinner	High importance	Tonight	No	Yes, it could be done by my sister	No, although she does prefer my cooking.	Rang sister, she will be able to cook dinner tonight.