

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Fatigue and pacing activities following a stroke

The aim of this leaflet is to explain about fatigue and pacing activities following a stroke.

What is fatigue?

Fatigue is the feeling of extreme tiredness or weakness which can make it difficult for you to perform ordinary tasks. Fatigue affects everyone differently. You may feel very tired and just want to sleep.

Fatigue may also be associated with pain and sometimes it can make you feel you have little control over your life.

Fatigue following stroke

Feeling tired is a common complaint after a stroke. About 30-70 percent of stroke patients suffer from fatigue. It can be frustrating and can slow down recovery. It can even affect those who are doing well after a stroke.

What is pacing?

Pacing involves taking planned breaks or rests within, or between, activities.

Pacing requires a degree of self-discipline as the natural inclination is often to try to get to the end of a job.

It is often more beneficial to take things steadily rather than continuing with an activity to the point of exhaustion and being forced to rest.

Why is it important to pace activities?

Once you have become more active, it is important you do not do too much. You will need to respect your limits and work on increasing these gradually.

It is very common when having a “good” day to have thoughts about completing more activities during the day, and when having a bad day to not want to complete any activities at all.

However, carrying out extra activities may cause such severe exhaustion that you may feel incapacitated the next day. This could possibly result in a vicious cycle of excess fatigue.

Pacing strategies can combat this vicious cycle of excess fatigue, and can lead to you being able to manage more activities long-term.

Top tips for pacing activities

1. Prioritise activities
2. Set goals - have an initial goal and work out how to achieve this by breaking it down into smaller stages
3. Plan activities
4. Take regular rest breaks
5. Know your limits within daily activities
6. Initially restrict the time you take to complete activities
7. Stop once the time allocated has passed
8. Decide how frequently you will complete the activity
9. Decide how you will progress the level of activity. Increase by small increments, for example ten percent.

Contact details

Stroke Early Supported Discharge
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Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions
Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222
Newark Hospital: 01636 685692
Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net

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