

# DICKINSON COUNTY DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP

Memorial Health System

## Diabetes and Fatigue: Everything You Need To Know

Excerpt from article written by Nicole Justus, RN, BSN for [THEDIABETESCOUNCIL.COM](http://THEDIABETESCOUNCIL.COM)

Having diabetes changes your blood. Imagine someone without diabetes having blood that flows like water. Now imagine someone with diabetes having blood that flows like maple syrup. When the blood flows much thicker and slower, like syrup, it is harder for cells to flow through the bloodstream to provide energy and oxygen to parts of the body, including the brain. Diabetes also causes inflammation, which sends messages to the brain that the body needs to take a rest in order to heal. When this happens, fatigue is going to be a problem.

One of the biggest reasons that diabetes causes fatigue is because of its complications. Organs such as the kidneys, eyes, heart, and the nerves can all be damaged because of diabetes. End stage renal disease, which is when the kidneys fail, can lead to low red blood cells. Low red blood cells, which is also known as anemia, can lead to fatigue. Studies have shown that people with diabetic complications such as nerve damage, heart disease, and kidney problems have increased levels of fatigue.

Fatigue can be caused by many things. Anyone experiencing fatigue should schedule appointment with their physician to make sure that there is not something causing the fatigue that needs treatment. Some of these diseases are anemia, cancer, fibromyalgia, and celiac disease.

When someone becomes fatigued, it can lead to a never ending cycle. First, because of the fatigue, they become tired and don't want to do anything. That leads to lack of exercise and poor dietary choices. These choices make them depressed, which in turn makes the fatigue even worse. This cycle continues and eventually the person begins to have complications from diabetes because their blood sugars are not under control.

Fatigue can cause someone to lose motivation to take care of themselves. They stop checking their blood sugar like they should or do things for themselves that they know they should because they are just too tired. Insulin dosages are skipped or not given accurately because of the time and energy that it takes to do it correctly. It is very important for all individuals with fatigue to find a solution, but it is even more important for those people with diabetes because of the risk of complications due to non-compliance.

Fatigue can be caused by something physical, emotional distress, or because of lifestyle choices. This means that individuals with diabetes are at a risk from developing fatigue because of many different reasons. An example is someone with diabetes who eats a very healthy diet and exercises daily. If they are too stressed because of the struggle to control their blood sugar, they could develop fatigue. Another example is someone who is very calm and follows their insulin and diet plan perfectly, but they have restless leg syndrome because of the nerve damage caused by diabetes.

Having physical, emotional, and lifestyle risk factors makes it very difficult for people with diabetes to avoid fatigue. Many people experience multiple problems that cause fatigue, such as sleep apnea and anxiety. Dealing with both of these makes it even harder to overcome the fatigue. This is why it is the most common symptom of diabetes.

Preventing fatigue with diabetes is a pretty challenging thing to do. The first thing that needs to be done is a visit to see your physician to make sure that the causes of fatigue is not due to another issue. Other things that can be done are:

- Keep blood sugar levels in a normal range
- Make sure that you are getting enough sleep
- Take a power nap during the day if you are able
- Try to limit the stressors in your life
- Ask for help from others when it's possible

Diabetes Support  
Group meets the first  
Tuesday of every  
month.

Join us on  
June 7 2022  
at 12:00 pm in  
Memorial Hospital  
Conference Room B

# WHY AM I FEELING TIRED?



**FATIGUE IS A SYMPTOM THAT CAN SOMETIMES OCCUR IN PEOPLE DIAGNOSED WITH DIABETES.**

There are a number of potential causes of fatigue:

- Diabetes
- Celiac disease
- Depression
- Illness
- Anemia
- Underactive thyroid

If you are repeatedly suffering tiredness through the day over an extended period of time, it's important to see your doctor to assess the cause. You should also see your doctor if you have other symptoms of diabetes as well.




If you have diabetes you may feel fatigue despite having slept for a normal length of time if you had either high or low blood glucose levels over night. If you are feeling fatigue unrelated to glucose levels during the day, it may be worthwhile testing your blood glucose during the night to check whether they're normal.

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I'm always looking for great ideas for speakers and activities! If you have something you would like more information on, or a topic that you find interesting, please feel free to send me an email or give me a call.

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## June's Featured Recipe:

### **Simple Summer Cucumber and Tomato Salad**

#### Ingredients

- 10 1/2 oz cherry tomatoes (cut in half)
- 1 large cucumber (peeled and cut in half)

#### Dressing Ingredients

- 1/8 tsp black pepper
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 1/2 tbsp olive oil
- pinch salt (optional)

#### Directions

- Cut each cucumber half in half and slice into large chunks. Place the cucumber in a salad bowl with the cherry tomatoes.
- In a small bowl, whisk together the dressing ingredients. Pour the dressing over the cucumbers and tomatoes and serve.

Serving size: 1 cup

#### Nutrition Facts

- Calories 70; Saturated fat 0.5 g; Sodium 5 mg; Total Carbohydrates 4 g, Protein 1 g, Potassium 280 mg

Source: American Diabetes Association

