

Post Covid-19 Self Help Rehabilitation Guide

Fatigue and sleep

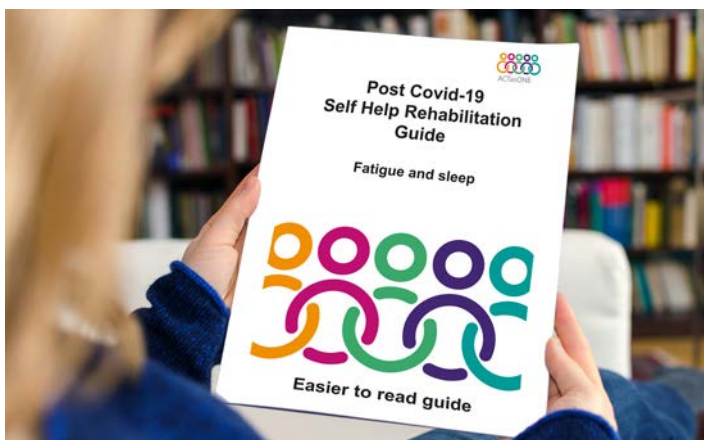


Easier to read guide

Introduction



These booklets are for people who have had Covid-19 and have symptoms that have lasted for more than 4 weeks.



There are 6 booklets in total. This one is about fatigue and sleep.



The booklets have been developed by lots of different healthcare professionals.

They work together to help people with long Covid.

Fatigue



Lots of people feel tired after doing exercise or concentrating for a long time.

Fatigue is a different type of feeling tired.



Fatigue can make people feel like they can't concentrate or remember things.



It is a common symptom after viral infections like Covid-19.

It usually stops after two to three weeks. For some people, though it can last for weeks or months.

What to do if you experience fatigue



Take it seriously and be kind to yourself by resting.

Make sure friends, family and others understand what fatigue is and how it affects you.



Try to get a good night's sleep. If your sleep pattern is disturbed you could feel worse.



Try relaxation techniques like:

- Meditation
- Reading
- Or anything else that you find relaxing.

How to conserve your energy.

The 3 Ps principle (pace, plan, prioritise) can help you



Pace

Take time to complete the things you do.

You will recover quicker if you work on a task until you're tired rather than exhausted.



It is a good idea to break up activities into smaller tasks and spread them out through the day.



For example, if you are cleaning, do your kitchen in the morning then your bathroom in the afternoon.

Plan



Have a think about the things you usually do and spread them out through the day or week.

If certain activities make you breathless, don't do them all at once, spread them out during the day.



You could think about changing the time you usually do something.

For example, if having a shower in the morning makes you feel fatigued, have a shower before bed.



If you have an occupational therapist, ask if there is any special equipment that could make tasks easier.

Ask family and friends to help you do activities when they are around.

Prioritise



Some daily tasks you will need to do but some you don't.

To help you prioritise tasks ask yourself these questions:

- What do I need to do today?
- What do I want to do today?
- What can be done another day?
- What can I ask someone else to do for me?

Sleep



When you have been poorly your sleep and wake routine can be affected.



This can cause you to be very tired and feel generally unwell.



You may feel more fatigued, have low mood, headaches and be forgetful.



There are some tips on the next few pages to get you back to a normal sleep cycle.



To help you stick to your routine you could write a sleep diary.



You could also write down anything that is making you anxious. This will help you to stop worrying about things at night.



Have a regular bedtime routine. Go to bed and get up at the same time every day.

Set an alarm if you need to.



Go to bed when you feel sleepy. Do some gentle exercise like yoga or stretching so you feel relaxed.



Try not to nap during the day as this can stop you from sleeping at night.

Don't watch TV or go on your phone or tablet for 1-2 hours before bed time.



Try to cut down on smoking and drinking alcohol as this can affect your sleep.

Don't eat just before going to bed, but also don't go to bed feeling hungry.

This resource was developed collectively by members of the multidisciplinary team featuring healthcare professionals working in health organisations across Bradford district and Craven. We are grateful to Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust and Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust for giving us permission to use and adapt their resource for Bradford district and Craven patients.

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