Why Kidney Cancer Makes You Feel Fatigued

by AMY MANLEY

Kidney Cancer and Fatigue

According to studies 9 out of 10 people with cancer suffer from fatigue. Fatigue impacts people with many different types of cancer, and kidney cancer is no different.

The symptoms of kidney cancer along with kidney cancer treatments are known to induce fatigue, which can impact your quality of life when not approached in the right way. By learning more about kidney cancer and fatigue and ways you can cope when it occurs, you can prevent the kidney cancer fatigue from compromising your quality of life.

What Causes Fatigue With Cancer?

Cancer itself takes a huge toll on the body. When you have cancer, your body is always working against itself, as if it's going into overdrive trying to rid itself of the illness.

If you've ever had a cold before and noticed you felt much more tired than usual, cancer affects the body in the same manner. Anytime your body has to work harder than usual, fatigue often occurs for as long as the extra work is going on.

Aside from cancer itself, many of the treatment methods used to help rid the body of cancer are also known to cause fatigue. These treatments include:

Chemotherapy and Fatigue

The medications used along with chemotherapy are known for commonly causing fatigue. You may feel fine for the first few weeks of chemo, but once the drugs work their way through your system, they often cause you to feel very tired.

Unfortunately, when fatigue is a side effect of chemotherapy, the only way to stop the fatigue is to stop the drugs. It can be stressful when your treatment is causing such a negative side-effect, but it's important to remember that the treatment will be worth it in the long run and the fatigue will dissipate.

Radiotherapy and Fatigue

According to experts, while fatigue occurs rather quickly with chemo, radiotherapy causes something called cumulative fatigue. Cumulative fatigue increases over time as treatment progresses, but similar to chemo, it will stop once treatment is complete.

Biological Therapy and Fatigue

When you have an infection in your body, you need something called cytokines in order to respond correctly to the infection. Cytokines are released by the bodies white blood cells and do not always form properly when cancer is present. Biological therapy works to release this natural cell protein into the body, which is known to cause fatigue. Like the other treatment methods, fatigue often persists until treatment is complete and the body regulates itself.

Combination Therapy and Fatigue

When kidney cancer is persistent, you may need more than one form of treatment during the same time, which is called combination therapy.

Your doctor will design a treatment plan that utilizes several forms of treatment to rid your body of the cancer, and while this method can be quite effective, many patients experience higher levels of fatigue with this approach than with any others.

Once the treatment ceases, the fatigue will come to an end.

Coping With Kidney Cancer and Fatigue

When you don't have any coping skills for your fatigue, it can feel as if it's the end of the world. While it is without a doubt difficult to live with, it's not the end, as you have more energized days ahead of you. The following tips can make it easier to cope when your fatigue interrupts your daily living.

- **Monitor your energy:** Dealing with fatigue is best controlled when you monitor it. By keeping track of how you feel throughout the day by journal you'll be able to refer to this information in the future and know what to expect.
- **Know when to expect fatigue:** Most people experience different signs prior to having a fatigue attack. By learning how to monitor these signs, you'll know when to expect an episode and will be able to prepare for it.
- **Plan ahead:** Getting tasks out of the way like grocery shopping, house cleaning, or finishing up a project. By finishing up important tasks now, when you have a bout of fatigue you will be able to relax rather than pushing yourself.
- **Rest, rest, rest:** The main reason you're experiencing fatigue from your treatment is because your body is going through so much. It's important that you offer your body with enough rest so that it's able to heal quicker and experience less fatigue moving forward.