What’s the Connection Between Asthma and Fatigue?

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How to Deal With Asthma Fatigue

There are many reasons why you may suffer from fatigue if you have asthma. The most common cause of fatigue is oxygen deprivation, however many other reasons may account for your shortness of breath.

Determining what is causing your fatigue is key to solving the problem. It likely that multiple factors may be involved, some of which may not be related to your asthma diagnosis, so it is important to explore all possibilities.

Can Asthma Cause Fatigue?

Fatigue is a common challenge people with asthma face. Breathing may be labored, you might not always eat well and your sleep may be frequently interrupted. If you have an infection or exacerbation of symptoms, your fatigue may be profound.

While it is important you respond to your body’s need for rest so it can heal and function, excessive fatigue is draining and interferes with your ability to live life to its fullest.

The Relationship Between Asthma and Fatigue

Working hard to breathe requires a lot of energy. With asthma, there are many times you may be working hard without even realizing it, particularly if you have been living with this condition for a long time.

You may be worried about how your illness is affecting you and your loved ones and the impacts it will have in the future. Stress is exhausting — couple the stress of living with a chronic condition with the ordinary burdens of everyday life and it is no wonder you are fatigued.

Many people who suffer from asthma are also plagued with anxiety and depression. Both of these conditions drain your energy. Sleeplessness, medication and infections may cause fatigue as well.

If your asthma fatigue is ongoing or difficult to relieve, consult your healthcare provider. It could even be unrelated to your asthma, in which case it is important you get to your doctor’s right away to determine treatment.

How to Cope With Asthma Fatigue

Fortunately, there are steps you can take today to reduce tiredness, give you energy and enhance your overall health.

1. Take Your Medication

If you have medications prescribed, such as nebulizer treatments or rescue inhalers, ensure you use them — they

can open up your air passages and make breathing easier. Your oxygen levels may rise and you will not work so hard to breathe.

2. Do Breathing Exercises

Another strategy you can use to relieve fatigue is to simply take some energizing breaths. Do not strain while performing this exercise — only do it to a degree comfortable for you.

This exercise is easy to perform and you can do it anywhere, whenever you feel fatigued. It is best performed in a sitting position, but you can modify it and do it in bed or while upright if necessary:

1. Sit comfortably with your open hands in a relaxed position on your lap.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Slowly take three deep breaths in through your nose.
4. Exhale through your mouth, keeping your lips relaxed and slightly apart.
5. Repeat the above breathing technique three times — notice how your body relaxes with each breath.
6. Take a quick breath through your nose, then forcefully exhale through your nose (without straining), using your abdominal muscles.
7. Repeat the quick breath two more times.
8. Resume the slow breathing technique for three breaths.
9. Sit quietly, open your eyes and enjoy how much better you feel.

This exercise relieves tension, which can cause difficulty breathing and contributes to asthma fatigue. It is an invigorating yet relaxing exercise that improves oxygenation of all of the tissues within your body.

After you perform this exercise, you can expect to feel more energized, yet calm. Use this technique whenever you are stressed, fatigued, or need to be able to focus on a task.

Other Ways to Prevent Asthma-Related Fatigue

Regardless of what is making you tired, there are steps you can implement at home to increase your energy levels. Here are some tips to get you started:

- Eat a healthy, simple, easy-to-prepare diet primarily comprised of fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Include healthy fats in small amounts and consume lean protein.
- Avoid fatty or sugary foods, as they may make you feel drowsy.
- Treat yourself to a stress-relieving massage for asthma.
- Drink caffeinated beverages in moderation.
- Include plenty of herbs in your diet.
- Spend time outdoors.
- Get rest and exercise every day.
- Take a stress formula multivitamin/multimineral supplement daily.

You could even join a support group for people who have asthma, where you would learn how others manage fatigue and other asthma symptoms. By communicating with others, you can become connected to people who understand what you are going through.

Healthy relationships are key to having plenty of energy. In addition to the advice you gain from other people with asthma, you will feel less isolated. This can boost your mood and energy levels.

You now have the tools that can empower you to feel less tired. By taking these steps you will be feel energized, be healthier, breathe easier and be happier overall.