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Have you ever felt like your body is just dragging on throughout the day, like you've just finished a big hike or ran a marathon, and your limbs just feel heavy? This feeling of heaviness deep inside your bones and muscles may make activities you like to do harder than they usually are. Perhaps you feel like no matter what you do, you cannot summon up the energy to do what you need or want to do in a day. The complex feelings of mentally or physically dragging throughout the day can be described as fatigue.

There are two ways of categorizing fatigue: peripheral or central. Peripheral fatigue is described as feeling a loss of muscle strength and is the type of fatigue experienced when working out. Muscle strength is often affected and seen during physical exercise; think about feeling like you've run a marathon and have just a little further to go. Central fatigue is considered subjective, and it is the person's perception of feeling tired, weak, or exhausted. This type of fatigue can involve either physical or mental components, sometimes both.

Fatigue is one of the most common Parkinson disease symptoms and can significantly hinder an individual's day-to-day activities. These disruptions in a person's ability to participate in activities they need or want to do can cause a significant impact on quality of life. Fatigue is present in 33-70% of people with Parkinson's, and

about 33% of people with Parkinson's consider it their most disabling symptom<sup>1</sup>.

Fatigue is a little bit tricky to understand, and a clear definition does not exist. Without a clear definition and how different fatigue is for each person (just like Parkinson's), it can be extremely frustrating and challenging. To add to the complexity, fatigue may be a symptom all on its own, or it may be the result of another symptom like depression, anxiety, or apathy. If you are experiencing challenges or frustration with fatigue, it is important to chat with your doctor to help you figure out the cause of your fatigue.

It is commonly thought that fatigue is just another way of saying tired, but it is important to note that fatigue and sleepiness are not the same and should not be treated the same. An easy way to figure out if you are fatigued or sleepy is to look at how you feel after a nap or some rest. Sleepiness is often resolved with a nap; however, fatigue is not, and you may wake up after a nap feeling the same as you did before your nap. If you are experiencing fatigue, it is important to discuss your symptoms with your doctor. Unfortunately, there is no effective treatment for fatigue, but there are adjustments you could try making in your day-to-day life to help combat it.

Just like Parkinson's, your experience of fatigue may look very different from someone else's. Some helpful adjustments include exercising regularly (especially early in the day to kickstart your energy first thing), keeping a regular schedule, reducing stress, and most importantly, have fun!

#### References

<sup>1</sup> Nassif, D. V. & Pereira, J. S. Fatigue in Parkinson Disease: concepts and clinical approach. *Psychogeriatrics* 2018, 18: 143-150.

