

# Post Stroke Fatigue

*Tiredness can contribute to stress as well as be a cause of it, so it is very important to get to the bottom of persistent or 'unexplained' tiredness:*

- The stroke will cause the person to feel tired. Apart from the physical causes, weakness and heaviness in muscles gives an impression of tiredness that adds to the feeling of fatigue
- Thinking with an injured brain is like having to walk with a broken leg in plaster – it takes more effort and the brain gets tired more quickly
- If an altered sense of time is one of the effects of stroke ([see page 56](#)), the person may wake at night after a couple of hours, feeling ready to start the 'new day'; this can disrupt their partner's rest and make the person tired later
- Looking after a person recovering from stroke is physically demanding and often means long days and broken sleep.

## **What helps**

- For the person with stroke, tiredness can be helped by having lots of short rests during the day, and alternating more demanding activities with quieter periods
- A partner could sleep in another room some nights to catch up on sleep. If the person feels anxious during the night it may seem difficult to leave them alone, but the caregiver must have adequate sleep to be able to keep up with all the other cares (and the anxious person may cope better than they expected with spending the night alone)
- As well as making sensible arrangements for help during the day ([see page 151](#)), the primary caregiver might consider having a helper stay overnight say once a week, to take over if the person needs help going to the toilet or with other cares during the night.

It can be hard to distinguish how much tiredness is due to physical causes like heavy work, intensive therapy or lack of sleep, and how much stems from psychological attitudes which need quite different management. Whatever the cause, take tiredness seriously and discuss it with a medical practitioner.

## Restlessness

*Restlessness may be a symptom of a number of medical or psychological conditions and may need to be investigated by the family doctor or specialist.*

The causes of restlessness may include:

- stimulants such as tea, coffee or alcohol taken in the evening
- some prescription drugs (check with your doctor)
- pain
- bladder problems
- depression
- heart or lung conditions which may lead to poor-quality sleep or breathing difficulties during sleep