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Fatigue describes a state of tiredness that does not resolve with rest or sleep.[1] In general usage, fatigue is synonymous with extreme tiredness or exhaustion that normally follows prolonged physical or mental activity. When it does not resolve after rest or sleep, or occurs independently of physical or mental exertion it may be a symptom of a medical condition that may become severe or progressive.[2]

Fatigue can be a feature of a mental disorder such as depression; may be associated with conditions of chronic pain such as fibromyalgia; it may also feature in conditions of chronic low-level inflammation, and be a disease-related symptom in many other conditions.[3] Fatigue often has no known cause, and is recognised as being very complex in nature.[4] Fatigability describes a susceptibility to fatigue.[5]

Physical fatigue results from muscle fatigue brought about by intense physical activity.[6][7][8] Mental fatigue results from prolonged periods of cognitive activity which impairs cognitive ability. Mental fatigue can manifest as sleepiness, lethargy, or directed attention fatigue.[9] Mental fatigue can also impair physical performance.

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