

### **FIGURE 3.**

## **PATIENT EDUCATION TIP SHEET: PREVENTING AND MANAGING FATIGUE**

Cancer-related fatigue is characterized by a distressing, persistent, subjective sense of tiredness or exhaustion related to cancer or cancer treatment that is not proportional to recent activity and interferes with usual functioning. The symptoms affect physical, psychological, and social functioning, and can cause significant distress for patients and caregivers. Fatigue can become chronic, leading to isolation, loneliness, and deconditioning of the body.

### **SYMPTOMS OF FATIGUE**

- **Physical:** An unrelenting feeling of tiredness or exhaustion that is not relieved by sleep
- **Psychological:** Absentmindedness, forgetfulness, difficulty communicating, unpleasant emotions, mental exhaustion, and impaired concentration and memory
- **Social:** Fatigue that limits ability to socialize, impairs relationships, and leads to feeling isolated or lonely

Always report your symptoms to your healthcare team.

### **MANAGING THE SYMPTOMS**

The following suggestions may help with symptoms of fatigue. Always check with your healthcare provider before taking new medications or starting an exercise program.

- **Nonpharmacologic:** Exercise, cognitive behavioral interventions, sleep interventions, ginseng, management of other symptoms, massage/ aromatherapy, mindfulness-based stress reduction, multicomponent rehabilitative intervention, psychoeducational interventions, and yoga
- **Pharmacologic:** Corticosteroids (low doses) and erythropoiesis-stimulating agents
- **Other:** Blood transfusions

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**Note.** Based on information from Oncology Nursing Society, 2017.