

# FIGHTING FATIGUE

Health Tips for healthy living.

May, 2008

Sponsored by Emma Ansara, FNP  
Western Maine Family Health Center

## Boost Your Energy

Fatigue can be a tough thing to beat, especially after a long, snowy winter. Now that spring is here, these tips will help you get your energy up so that you can go out and enjoy the season:

1. Exercise regularly. A brisk 10 minute walk can help you feel reenergized.
2. Eat breakfast.
3. Drink lots of water.
4. Eat fish, whole grains, almonds and other nuts to work more magnesium into your diet.

## The Importance of Sleep

Sleep should be one of your main priorities. Getting enough sleep is essential to good health and to having good energy throughout the day. These tips can help you get a better night's sleep:

1. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, including weekends.
2. Avoid caffeine and alcohol close to bedtime.
3. Exercise regularly and at least 3 hours before going to bed.
4. Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine such as a nighttime bath or listening to soothing music.
5. Try not to nap during the day. If you do take a nap, make sure it is no longer than 30 minutes and no later than early afternoon.
6. Sleep in a cool, quiet, and dark room.
7. Try not to do non-sleep activities like reading in bed. This will strengthen the association between your bed and sleeping.
8. If you can not fall asleep within 15-20 minutes of getting into bed (or waking up in the night), get out of bed and try to do something relaxing until you feel tired again.
9. Know the side effects of your medications. Certain medications such as those used for colds and allergies, high blood pressure, birth control, asthma, and treatment of pain can all cause insomnia.
10. See your doctor if your snoring keeps your partner or yourself from getting a restful nights sleep, especially if your snoring is associated with sleep apnea.

If you have a hard time getting a full night's sleep, you are not alone. According to the National Sleep Foundation, about half of Americans report experiencing some kind of insomnia. You may have insomnia if you feel fatigued or unrested after having slept, if you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, or if you wake up early in the morning (before you would normally get up) and can not get back to sleep. If you think you have insomnia see your doctor; he or she can help identify the cause of your insomnia and develop a treatment.

## When It's More Than Just Fatigue

Being worn out from a long day at work, stress, or vigorous physical activity is normal. Feeling exhausted on a more regular basis, however, can be a sign of something more long-term. Fatigue experienced over a long period of time can be a symptom of some conditions like depression and can worsen other conditions such as diabetes or insomnia. "So many of our health problems these days really stem from spreading ourselves too thin or 'hurry sickness,'" says Emma Ansara, Family Nurse Practitioner at Western Maine Family Health Center in Livermore Falls. "I really encourage patients to set achievable goals. Once we have success in one area, we are more than likely to continue in that area." Achievable goals start out small and are easy to incorporate into daily life. For example, an achievable exercise goal would be to walk for ten minutes, three days per week. You are more likely to reach this goal than you would be to run for two miles every day. "Goals for a less stressful life like eating healthier, sleeping more, and spending time with family and friends should not make you feel more stressed" Ansara says, "they should bring your stress level down." In May Ansara will be teaching an Adult Education class about how to manage fatigue and stress. The class is free and is being offered twice, once through Livermore Falls Adult Education and again through Turner Adult Education. If you live in or around these towns and are interested in taking the class watch your mail for the fliers announcing where the classes will be held and how to sign up. If you are experiencing chronic fatigue make an appointment to see your healthcare provider so that you can discuss possible causes and treatments.

Western Maine Family Health Center is part of the HealthReach Community Health Centers family and is now accepting new patients. To make an appointment, call 897-4345. HealthReach Community Health Centers is a system of eleven federally qualified, community-based health centers located in central and western Maine. Dedicated providers deliver high-quality, affordable healthcare to underserved residents in over 80 rural communities. HealthReach is a private, non-profit organization with a 30-year history, funded by patient fees, grants and individual donations. For further information on HealthReach, visit [www.HealthReachCHC.org](http://www.HealthReachCHC.org).

## HealthReach Community Health Centers

A nonprofit 501.c.3 organization.



### 12 locations to serve you:

Bethel Family Health Center – Bethel  
Bingham Area Health Center – Bingham  
Belgrade Regional Health Center – Belgrade  
Lovejoy Health Center – Albion  
Madison Area Health Center – Madison  
Mt. Abram Regional Health Center – Kingfield  
Richmond Area Health Center – Richmond  
Rangeley Region Health Center – Rangeley  
Strong Area Health Center – Strong  
Strong Area Dental Center – Strong  
Sheepscoot Valley Health Center – Coopers Mills  
Western Maine Family Health Center – Livermore Falls