



RADIATION ONCOLOGY

## Ways to Save Energy

Using energy-saving methods means that you will try to do all your tasks in the most efficient way. This will allow you to complete more tasks and take part in more activities while keeping up your strength and energy as much as possible. Below are some methods to help you save energy.

### Planning

- Plan out specific tasks. For example, "How can I do my laundry with the fewest number of trips?" "What can I make for supper that will be simple and nutritious and doesn't take an extra trip to the store?"
- Decide which things must be done by you and what things can be done by someone else.
- Ask for help when you have low energy days!
- Decide and list which tasks are the most important for the day, which are second most important, and which tasks would be nice to complete but can wait.
- Plan the activities that use a lot energy for the times of day you usually feel the best.
- Plan leisure activities to match the level of your energy.
- Plan activities for childcare that allow you to sit down. For example, drawing and picture games.

### Energy Saving Methods for Food Preparation

- Store both foods and tools near the place you use them. For example, keep the can opener near the canned goods or the potatoes stored near the place where you prepare them.
- Organize your work center. Keep all baking items together, pans together within easy reach, and cleaning items for the kitchen together in one container.
- Serve meals in the same pot in which they were prepared rather than transferring to a serving dish. This helps to save extra steps and extra cleanup.
- Prepare simple one-pot meals in crock pots such as soups, stews, or chili. Refrigerate or freeze leftover portions to use later.
- Use prepared foods or prepare double portions of food and freeze half for later use.
- Soak dishes instead of scrubbing. Let dishes air dry.

### **Diet Hints to Promote Energy**

- Dietary intake is a source of energy. Eat 5 to 6 small meals a day to provide a steady source of energy rather than 3 big meals a day.
- Include protein foods as much as possible. One third to one half of the protein you eat slowly becomes your body's carbohydrate source. This keeps your blood sugars level and provides a continuous source of energy.
- Eat your sweets while eating other foods containing fat, fiber, and protein. This helps the sweets to enter your body in a gradual manner and avoids ups and downs in blood sugar levels which can add to fatigue.

### **Pacing**

- Schedule household tasks throughout the week rather than trying to get it all done in one day.
- Use rest breaks to save energy for the things you want to do.
- Avoid starting activities that you cannot stop in the middle in the case you become tired.
- At work, alternate physically demanding tasks with sedentary tasks.
- Take a rest as needed. This may be a simple pause in activity or a power nap (less than 1 hour).
- If you find yourself becoming exhausted, stop. The task can wait.
- Balance your activities with plenty of rest and relaxation.
- Take time out for things you really enjoy. Read a magazine, go for a leisurely walk, do needle point, or watch a favorite television program.

### **Positioning**

- Use good body mechanics while working to help save energy.
- Try to sit as much as possible when you work or perform activities. For example, do ironing sitting down, sit on a stool at the kitchen sink when preparing food for meals, sit on a shower chair during your shower, or sit down when drying yourself off after a shower or bath.
- Push things instead of carrying them. This saves energy.
- Store your most frequently used items at heights that do not require a lot of reaching or stooping.
- Hang pots and utensils above the stove or even store things neatly out on the counter.
- Teach children to climb into your lap instead of you lifting them into your lap

### **References**

1. Donovan, E. [1995, October 25] Energy conservation in Fatigue Initiative Through Research and Education course by ONS and Ortho Biotech Inc. Phoenix, AZ
2. *Oncology Patient Education Manual*. Aspen Reference Group/Health and Science, S. Weavers, Managing Editor and L. Haught, Editor. Aspen Publishers, Gaithersburg, Maryland 1999