

# Relay For Life Kickoff Event Will Be Held Feb. 28

On Feb. 28 at 5:30pm, the American Cancer Society Relay For Life® of the Yankton Area will officially get underway.

Event volunteers and participants will gather at the Avera Sacred Heart Hospital Pavilion for a kickoff event to launch their fundraising efforts for the year. The kickoff will share information about this year's Relay For Life and how groups can register a team for the event scheduled for June 29-30 at Riverside Park. Anyone interested in learning more about Relay For Life is welcome to attend, and dinner will be served.

To learn more about the Yankton Area Relay For Life, call 1-800-227-2345, or visit [www.RelayForLife.org/yanktonSD](http://www.RelayForLife.org/yanktonSD)

# The Battle of Fatigue

**BY MCKENZIE HANSON, M.D.**

Board Certified Family Medicine  
Physician at Y  
ankton Medical Clinic, P.C.

One of the most common and challenging questions asked of me in my day to day practice regards fatigue. In most cases, the cause can be traced to a lifestyle factor, psychological problem, or a medical condition. Feeling tired can also be manifested in different forms. For some, they describe it as feeling run down. Others may say they tire easily or have a difficult time maintaining an activity. There is also mental fatigue. This can be described as difficulties with concentration and/or memory or feelings of depression.

For lifestyle factors, common examples are alcohol, caffeine, inactivity, poor sleep, and medications. If you drink alcohol, it is advised that men have no more than 2 drinks per night and women no more than 1. Caffeinated beverages should be limited to less than 500 mg per day or between 2 to 4 cups of coffee. In regards to exercise, 30 minutes daily is a general guide.

This can sound overwhelming and too time consuming; however, the activity does not need to be done all at the same time. For example, you could spend 10 minutes doing stairs during your breaks at work or park farther away from the grocery store.

As far as sleep conditions contributing to fatigue, two examples are sleep apnea and insomnia but are not limited to these. Sleep apnea is a disorder in which breathing repeatedly stops and starts. Symptoms are loud snoring, morning headache, daytime fatigue, or abrupt awakening with feelings of shortness of breath. Insomnia is when a person has trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. It is recommended for adults to get seven to eight hours of sleep per night. Insomnia can stem from other issues; therefore, it is multifactorial and can be addressed in more detail at your doctor's visit.

Finally, lifestyle factors can also include medications that could be contributing to fatigue. A few examples include a) antihistamines – which are commonly used for allergies and rashes b) cough and cold remedies c) prescription pain medications d)

muscle relaxants e) blood pressure pills and f) some antidepressants. With so many possibilities it is important to do a thorough review of medications with your doctor.

Fatigue can also be a symptom of a psychological condition such as anxiety, depression, grief, or stress. Some other symptoms of anxiety are constant worry, difficulty concentrating or mind going blank, irritability, or rapid heartbeat. Some even describe it as a sense that something bad is going to happen. Depression is often described with feelings of sadness, crying spells, loss of interest in daily activities, or feelings of guilt. Grief reactions are feelings experienced due to a life-changing event such as the loss of a loved one. Stressors can vary from marital to financial to employment concerns. So don't be surprised if your doctor asks about these above conditions as well.

There could also be the possibility of an underlying medical condition causing your fatigue. However, this is the most unlikely cause. Usually with a few simple lifestyle changes it is likely you will be able to re-energize. There are numerous medical conditions that have fatigue as one symptom coupled with other symptoms, so you must fully discuss them with your doctor. For example, if you are having fatigue plus urinary frequency or excessive thirst, it may indicate diabetes or a kidney problem since both can manifest with these symptoms. An under-active thyroid can present with fatigue, constipation, dry skin, and in women – abnormal menstrual cycles. Also those who suffer from lung disease such as COPD or emphysema may tire easily just doing normal activities of daily living like laundry, vacuuming or getting the mail. Therefore, letting your physician take a thorough patient history is a good start, and having a good doctor/ patient relationship is key in developing a plan.

Contact your physician today if you are feeling fatigued coupled with other symptoms, or if you feel that altering lifestyle factors (other than required prescription medications) is not making a difference in your fatigue. We are here to help.

# What Does 120/80 Mean to You? It's Time to Know Your Numbers

**BY BYRON S. NIELSEN, M.D.,**

Board Eligible Nephrologist at  
Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C.

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a disorder currently affecting millions of Americans. Hypertension is defined as a blood pressure of more than 140 over 90 with prehypertension being defined as a blood pressure between 120 to 139 over 80 to 89.

According to the most recent data, 60 million Americans over the age of 18 have high blood pressure and over one half of Americans over the age of 65 have the disorder. This is substantially higher than the previous count from the 1990's when 43.2 million Americans were diagnosed.

Unfortunately, the numbers are still on the rise. Currently only about half of those diagnosed with hypertension have their blood pressure under control.

In the beginning stages of the disease, high blood pressure tends to be symptom free. It usually doesn't cause complications until years after its onset. Most of the effects of high blood pressure are on the cardiovascular system including the heart and blood vessels. Due to this, long-standing high blood pressure greatly increases the risk of heart disease and stroke, especially when combined with diabetes, high cholesterol or cigarette smoking.

High blood pressure also has been associated with the development of congestive heart failure, heart attacks, heart rhythm disturbances and sudden cardiac death. It too plays a part in the development of chronic renal failure and is the second leading cause of developing end-stage renal disease, which requires dialysis. Adequately treating hypertension has been shown to reduce the

risk of stroke by 35 to 40 percent, heart attack by 20 to 25 percent and heart failure by 50 percent.

Although all adults are at risk for the development of hypertension during their lifetime, there are some groups of individuals that are at an even higher risk. The African American population has a higher likelihood of hypertension and often will have more severe disease.

Other factors that increase risk include obesity, physical inactivity, high cholesterol, renal disease, excessive alcohol intake (more than two drinks per day in women and three drinks per day in men), genetic predisposition and high salt intake. Even if you do not fit into any of these categories, every adult should undergo routine screening. It is currently accepted that every adult over the age of 18 should see their physician and be screened for high blood pressure at least every two years. Those with prehypertension should be screened on a yearly basis.

All patients that are diagnosed with hypertension need to be followed closely by their physician to assure proper control of their blood pressure and to monitor signs of complications associated with it. Your physician will do a full evaluation and help you decide the right course of therapy. There are currently many different medications for the treatment of hypertension and the choice of medication will depend on the severity of your high blood pressure and any other co-existing medical conditions.

There are also multiple lifestyle changes that are beneficial for all patients with hypertension, and when used alone or in combination with medical therapy, they can lead to a dramatic reduction in blood pressure. It is possible to come off of medication

with lifestyle changes. However, if you have high or difficult-to-control blood pressure your physician may refer you to a specialist, such as a Nephrologist.

Individuals with high blood pressure should follow a low-sodium diet (less than two grams per day). It has been found that limiting salt in the diet can lead to a five-point reduction in blood pressure. Salt is found in multiple food sources including prepackaged, canned and processed foods as well as in cured meats. A good rule of thumb is to remember that unprocessed foods are most likely very low in sodium. All hypertensive patients should try to cook with fresh fruits, vegetables and meats without adding salt during cooking or at the table. There are also multiple salt substitutes that can be used in place of sodium. However, it is best to get those substitutes approved by a doctor.

Another dietary change that has improved blood pressure, and also reduces cholesterol is the DASH diet. This is a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat and nonfat dairy, lean meats, fish, beans and nuts. More information regarding this diet can be found online at [www.dashdiet.org](http://www.dashdiet.org) <<http://www.dashdiet.org>> . In addition to these two dietary modifications, increasing exercise and decreasing weight is not only beneficial for overall health, but also it will help reduce blood pressure and cholesterol and improve diabetes control.

High blood pressure is often a silent, but dangerous condition making screening and treatment an important part of every adult's health. Please make an appointment with your physician today to make sure your cardiovascular health is under good control.

# Exploring Natural Remedies, What Works Best With What Condition

As prevalent as prescription medications are, all-natural remedies for common illnesses and conditions are still a viable alternative to prescription medications for many people. But are these all-natural options safe?

In 2011, Apple founder Steve Jobs lost his battle with pancreatic cancer. Reports indicate that Jobs, a devout Buddhist, delayed surgery and other traditional treatments for almost a year while he participated in holistic treatments for the cancer. Some of these included juice fasts, bowel cleansings, acupuncture, herbal supplements, and even a vegan diet. Eventually, Jobs had surgery, but some experts feel he waited too long.

Although conventional care is often an effective means to treating illnesses and other conditions, there are many doctors who agree that implementing natural remedies at times can be safe and effective. Furthermore, not all natural remedies are without merit, and some traditional medicines are actually derived from natural, plant-

based ingredients themselves.

According to surgeon and author, Dr. Walter C. Thompson, "Herbal medicine is safe because it's natural. After researching the literature, one can truly say that, at the very least, herbal medicine is safer than conventional drugs."

Those thinking about incorporating natural remedies into their health regimen can consider the following options.

- Nervousness and anxiety: Try lettuce, chamomile, valerian, and rose petals.
- Pain relief: Use omega-3 fatty acids, green tea, ginger root, and turmeric.
- Itchiness: Witch hazel, jewelweed and aloe vera are effective.
- Feminine issues: Parsley, basil and goldenseal can alleviate symptoms associated with menstruation.
- Antibiotics: Oregano and garlic are purported to have antibiotic qualities and can fend off harmful bacteria.
- Infections: Honey has long been used to heal and as an anti-



bacterial and antifungal remedy.

Many natural foods are effective in preventing and fighting cancer as well.

Although natural remedies can be effective, it's important for pregnant women to avoid any herbs and plant supplements

until discussing the risks/benefits with their doctors. Also, some natural remedies can interact with prescription drugs or increase their potency, so it's important to talk to a doctor about any plans.

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# Fight Against Daytime Drowsiness

Do you find yourself reaching for a can of soda or a cup of coffee during the day to banish fatigue?

Many do.

But you may want to grab a bottle of water instead. Research indicates that lack of water is the No. 1 trigger of daytime fatigue. Therefore, not only can drinking adequate supplies of water keep you refreshed, it can also help to keep you more awake—even during a boring business meeting.

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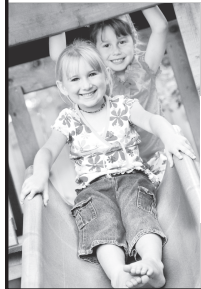
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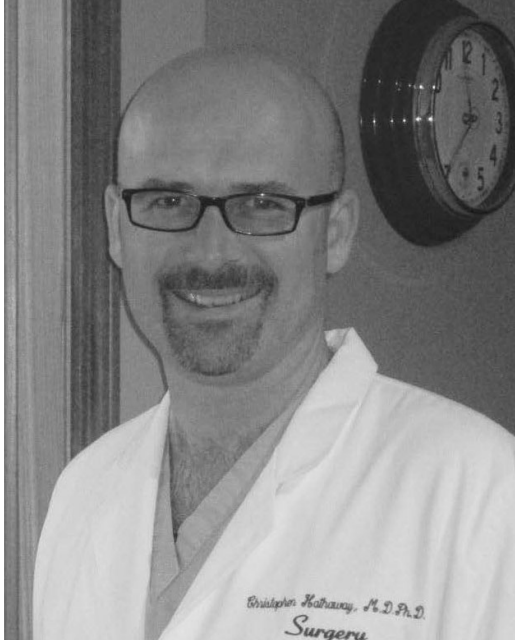
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