



## Tiredness is a clue — not a diagnosis.

Your exhaustion is real — but 'adrenal fatigue' usually isn't the cause. The real cause is often findable, and very treatable.



RUNNING ON LOW?



**1 in 10**

GP visits are mainly about feeling tired



**7–9 hrs**

sleep most adults actually need



**Most**

causes are common & treatable

## Common causes of fatigue



### Not enough sleep

Late nights, screens, shift work or broken sleep slowly drain your reserves.

- More likely if: you wake unrefreshed or get under 7 hours.



### Stress, burnout & low mood

Anxiety and depression often show up as exhaustion and fog, not just worry or sadness.

- More likely if: you feel flat, on-edge or overwhelmed.



### Low iron

Common — around 1 in 5 women of childbearing age. Tires you even before anaemia shows on a blood test.

- More likely if: heavy periods, a plant-based diet, or you're a blood donor.



### Underactive thyroid

A slow thyroid slows everything — energy, mood, concentration and weight.

- More likely if: feeling cold, constipation, dry skin or weight gain.



### Sleep apnoea

Breathing pauses during sleep mean you never get true rest, however long you're in bed.

- More likely if: you snore, or doze off during the day.



### Blood sugar & metabolic health

Energy crashes, sugar cravings and post-meal slumps can point to metabolic health issues.

- More likely if: crashes after meals, or strong sugar cravings.

## What about "adrenal fatigue"?

The exhaustion is real — but 'adrenal fatigue' isn't a recognised medical diagnosis, and there's no good evidence that healthy adrenal glands become 'exhausted'. This is different from true adrenal insufficiency (Addison's disease) — a genuine, treatable condition your GP can test for. A home saliva cortisol test isn't a reliable way to diagnose either one. The good news: once the real cause is found, most people start to feel better.



## Start here: small changes that genuinely help

**1**

**Protect your sleep**

Regular hours, screens off early, a wind-down routine

**2**

**Eat for energy**

Iron-rich foods and regular meals through the day

**3**

**Move a little daily**

A short daily walk lifts energy over time

**4**

**Ease the load**

Protect downtime; talk things through

**5**

**Mind caffeine & alcohol**

Especially in the afternoon and evening

### See your GP if...

- Fatigue lasting more than a few weeks, or getting worse
- It's affecting your work, study or daily life
- Unexplained weight loss
- Breathlessness or drenching night sweats
- It started after a virus or infection and hasn't lifted
- You're simply worried about it

### What your GP might do

- Review your sleep and lifestyle
- Ask about stress and your mental wellbeing
- Check your current medications
- Arrange blood tests if needed — iron, thyroid, blood sugar and others
- Assess for sleep apnoea
- Discuss diet, exercise and metabolic health

### Worth noting before your appointment

- When the tiredness started
- Your sleep — hours and quality
- Mood and stress levels
- Periods or heavy bleeding, if relevant
- Alcohol, caffeine and medications
- What makes it better or worse

**7-day energy tracker**

Rate your energy 1–5 each day for a week and bring it in — patterns are often the biggest clue.

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1–5	1–5	1–5	1–5	1–5	1–5	1–5

### Ask a better question

Instead of “Do I have adrenal fatigue?” ask “Why am I tired?”

*Finding the real cause is the first step towards feeling like yourself again. — Dr Regu*