

Tired all the time? Let's ask why.

You do not have to make constant exhaustion your normal.

If fatigue lasts for weeks, affects daily life or comes with other symptoms, book a GP appointment. The right tests depend on your story and examination.

Bring a timeline and explain the impact. Mention sleep, snoring, heavy periods, pregnancy/postpartum changes, diet, medicines, mood and whether activity makes you substantially worse afterwards. Not every cause of fatigue shows up on a blood test.

Blood tests to discuss

Tests are chosen for your symptoms and history. This is a discussion guide, not a request for every test.

Test	Why it may help
FBC and ferritin	Check for anaemia or depleted iron stores, especially with heavy periods.
Thyroid function	Checks whether a thyroid disorder could be contributing.
Glucose or HbA1c	Checks for diabetes when clinically appropriate; mention thirst, frequent urination or weight loss.
Kidney and liver function	May help identify other medical contributors to persistent unexplained fatigue.
B12 and folate	Consider with compatible symptoms, blood-count changes or deficiency risks, such as restricted diet or absorption problems.
Further tests if indicated	Coeliac screening, inflammatory markers, calcium/phosphate or vitamin D may be useful in selected circumstances.

Keep this guide for your next GP appointment. Ask for a copy of your results and a clear follow-up plan.

Your next steps

Start with an assessment

Sleep problems, medication effects, stress, low mood and medical conditions can all matter. Investigations should follow the clues.

Do not miss sleep apnoea

Tell your GP about loud snoring, waking unrefreshed, daytime sleepiness or witnessed pauses/gasping during sleep.

Ask what each test is for

A focused set of tests is often more helpful than an expensive panel with no plan for interpreting it.

Make a plan for normal results too

If you still feel unwell, ask what the next step is. Persistent symptoms deserve follow-up even when initial results are reassuring.

NICE lists broader investigations when ME/CFS is suspected. That is not a universal blood-test panel for everyone who feels tired, and there is no single blood test for ME/CFS.

Questions for your appointment

1. Which causes fit my symptoms?
2. Which tests are useful for me, and why?
3. Could my sleep or medicines be contributing?
4. When will we review the results and symptoms?

When to get help

Seek urgent help for chest pain, severe breathlessness or collapse. Contact your GP promptly for unexplained weight loss, bleeding or new neurological symptoms.

Sources and further reading

NHS: tiredness and fatigue

NICE NG206: suspected ME/CFS assessment

NHS: B12 and folate diagnosis

Adapted from Doctor Barbara's educational content with source-based updates. General information for adults, not personalised advice. Pregnancy and children's care need tailored advice. This guide cannot diagnose you or replace your healthcare professional.