

Patient information

Postural Hypotension

LUHFT Trust wide

Postural Hypotension (also known as orthostatic hypotension) is a fall in blood pressure that occurs when changing position from lying to sitting or sitting to standing.

- Postural - Change in position.
- Hypotension - Low blood pressure.

What are the symptoms of postural hypotension?

A fall in blood pressure may lead to a reduced blood flow to your muscles, brain and other organs; this can cause a variety of symptoms including:

- A feeling of dizziness or being light headed, sometimes leading to falling.
- Change in your vision such as blurring, greying or blacking of vision.
- Feeling vague or muddled.
- Losing consciousness, with or without warning - this is a 'blackout' or 'syncope' (simple faint).
- Weakness and fatigue.
- Pain may occur in a variety of places- neck, shoulder, lower back and buttocks, including angina type pain in chest.
- Feeling sick, hot and clammy.

Symptoms may vary between people

The following may make symptoms worse:

- **Medication**

Some medication can affect your blood pressure. Ask your doctor or pharmacist.

- **Dehydration**

If you have not drunk enough fluid, heavy sweating, loss of blood, severe diarrhoea and vomiting.

- **Getting overheated**

After a hot bath, being in a hot room or on a sunny day.

- **Anxiety and panic**

This can cause you to change your normal breathing pattern.

- **Illness**

Cold/infection.

Sometimes there is no particular obvious cause of this condition. It is more common in the elderly or in some patients with conditions such as Diabetes and Parkinson's disease.

There are many simple steps to manage or prevent postural hypotension.

Here are some suggestions:-

Go slow

You may be able to reduce the dizziness and light headedness that occurs with postural hypotension by moving slowly when you move from lying to a standing position.

When getting out of bed breathe deeply for a few minutes then slowly sit up before standing. Count to 10 before starting.

Exercise your calf muscles before sitting up and getting out of bed. Sit on the edge of your bed for a minute before standing. You can flex your ankles up and down and do gentle marching movements to stimulate your circulation.

Have plenty of fluids

Keeping hydrated helps prevent symptoms of low blood pressure. At least six to eight glasses of fluid a day is recommended. Drink a large glass of water before getting out of bed in the morning.

Avoid alcohol.

Avoid bending at the waist or stretching up

If you drop something on the floor squat with your knees to recover it or sit down on a nearby chair in order to reach it. Alternatively ask someone else to help you. Avoid standing for long periods of time.

Sit down to do tasks such as getting dressed, showering, or working in the kitchen. Avoid becoming constipated

Ensure a diet high in fibre. Avoid large heavy meals.

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Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

If you need any further information please telephone the hospital switchboard and ask to be put through to the Falls Team

Aintree Hospital

Tel: 0151 529 5980

Text phone number: 18001 0151 529 5980

Royal Liverpool Hospital

Tel 0151 706 2000

Tel: 18001 0151 706 2000

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