

Postural hypotension

This information is about postural hypotension and explains its causes and symptoms and how to manage symptoms.

What is this information about?

This information is about postural hypotension which is also called 'orthostatic hypotension' or 'postural drop'. It explains:

- the causes of postural hypotension
- the symptoms of postural hypotension
- how to avoid getting the symptoms as often or as badly.

Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information because you have been diagnosed as having postural hypotension.

What is postural hypotension?

Postural hypotension is a drop in blood pressure when you move:

- from lying down to sitting
- from sitting to standing up.

What causes Postural Hypotension?

Sometimes postural hypotension is caused by the body becoming less effective at coping with fluctuations in blood pressure as people get older. This can be difficult to treat.

There are many other things that can make it more likely that you will get postural hypotension at any age. They include:

- taking some medications, such as blood pressure tablets
- not drinking enough fluids (dehydration)
- staying in bed, or standing up, for a long time
- having eaten recently (being post prandial)

- drinking alcohol
- being in a place which is too warm
- medical conditions including diabetes, Parkinson's and heart conditions.

What are the most common symptoms of postural hypotension?

The symptoms you get from postural hypotension and how bad they are can be different from day to day.

Common symptoms include:

- feeling dizzy or light-headed
- fainting or collapsing
- feeling unsteady
- changes in how well you can see things, such as things looking blurred
- general weakness.

What can I do to manage my postural hypotension?

Do:

- drink enough water throughout the day – drink a glass of water before you:
 - get up in the morning
 - stand up for longer than a couple of minutes
- move slowly between lying and sitting and sitting and standing. This will give your body time to adjust
- when you stand up, wait until any dizziness has settled before you move again. **Do not** move quickly, as this makes you more likely to fall

- try wearing compression stockings. Please ask a medical professional if this is right for you first
- keep as active as possible by doing things like going for a walk or housework. This will help to keep you strong and maintain your balance
- Please see: weareundefeatable for help with this or ask your medical professional.

What can my doctor do to help with my postural hypotension?

Your doctor may check any medicines that you are taking. If they could give you postural hypertension or make the symptoms worse your doctor may change or adjust them.

What exercises can I do before I sit up or stand up to reduce my symptoms of postural hypotension?

Do try these exercises which can help to prevent or reduce the symptoms of postural hypotension:

1. **Ankle circles or pumping your toes up and down. This can be done when you are sitting or lying. Do this for at least 30 seconds.**



2. 'Marching' your legs while you are sitting.
Lift your knees up and down.
Do this at least five times each side.



3. Squeezing your bottom to work your bottom muscles.
This can be done when you are lying, sitting or standing.
Repeat this at least ten times.



4. **Foot lifts.** Lift your foot so that your knee is as straight as possible. Hold for three seconds and relax. Repeat with the other side. Do at least five times for each leg.



Who should I contact if I need more help or advice?

Please contact your GP if you need more help or advice after you have read this information.

**This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care
in Brighton & Hove or Haywards Heath**

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