

Orthostatic Hypotension

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Fact Sheet

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Published YEAR

What is orthostatic hypotension?

Dizziness is a common symptom of anxiety stress and, and If one is experiencing anxiety, dizziness can result. On the other hand, dizziness can be anxiety producing. The vestibular system is responsible for sensing body Orthostatic hypotension, also called as postural hypotension, is a large drop in blood pressure when you stand up from sitting or lying down. Orthostatic hypotension can make you feel dizzy, unsteady or even cause you to faint.

This condition is more common in older people but is seen in all age groups. Occasional dizziness or lightheadedness may not require you to see a physician. It may be caused by not drinking enough water, low blood sugar, or too much time in the sun or hot tub. Symptoms may last only a few seconds to minutes after standing. it is important to talk to your doctor if your symptoms are happening regularly because you could be at risk for falls

What causes orthostatic hypotension?

When you stand up quickly, there is a decrease in blood flow, causing less oxygen to your brain. Your heart rate should increase when you stand up so your body gets enough blood flow to prevent lightheadedness. When your body does not react fast enough, this condition can occur.

Am I at risk?

- Age: Most orthostatic hypotension occurs in adults age 65 and older
- Medications: Some medications, especially high blood pressure medication, may cause orthostatic hypotension. Some non-prescription medications many cause low blood pressure when taken with prescribed drugs. Tell your doctor of all medications that you take.

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- Certain diseases: Parkinson's disease and some heart conditions may put you at more risk of having orthostatic hypotension
- Heat Exposure: Being in a hot environment can cause you to sweat and possibly cause dehydration, which can lower your blood pressure and cause orthostatic hypotension if you stand up quickly
- Bed rest: If you have to stay in bed for a long time due to an illness you may become weak. When first getting out of bed you may experience orthostatic hypotension.
- You can be tested for orthostatic hypotension by a variety of medical providers including physical therapists. You can take precautions to prevent falls due to orthostatic hypotension by taking time between position changes to allow your blood pressure to stabilize, performing simple exercises prior to standing, or you may even be encouraged to wear compressive socks or a stomach binder. Persistent or problematic orthostatic hypotension needs to be addressed by a medical provider who is knowledgeable about orthostatic hypotension.

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Suggestions to prevent falls due to orthostatic hypotension:

- Take time between position changes to let your blood pressure to stabilize
- Perform simple exercise before standing (ankle pumps)
- Wear compression socks or a stomach binder