

Low Blood Pressure When Standing Up Postural Hypotension

Have you ever noticed when you change position from lying down or sitting to standing, you feel lightheaded, dizzy, or faint?

This is a form of low blood pressure. You might hear it called 'postural hypotension' or 'orthostatic hypotension'. 'Postural' or 'orthostatic' means when you change positions. 'Hypotension' means low blood pressure.

After standing up, the low blood pressure lasts for a few seconds, sometimes up to a few minutes. This can result in feeling unsteady and falling down.

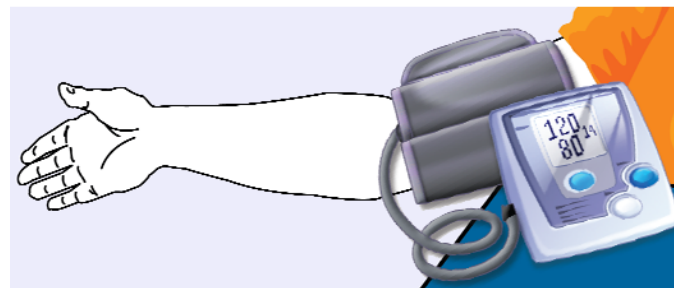
Postural hypotension is most likely to happen:

- 30 to 60 minutes after a heavy or large meal
- 1 to 2 hours after taking blood pressure medication
- Right after getting out of bed in the morning

How is it treated?

We don't usually treat this type of low blood pressure. Instead, there are things you can do to help prevent it from happening.

However, if it happens often or lasts longer than a couple of minutes, talk to your doctor. Some people need their medications adjusted.



Ways to prevent postural hypotension

- ✓ Try not to change positions suddenly.
 - When getting out of bed:**
 1. Sit up in bed for 1 minute with your legs straight out in bed.
 2. Sit on the edge of the bed with your legs over the edge of the bed for 1 minute.
 3. Stand up slowly, holding onto the edge of the bed or another piece of furniture that will not move.
 - After sitting for a while:**
 1. Pump your ankles up and down for several minutes.
 2. Slowly stand up, holding onto a steady object.
 3. Stand in one place for 1 minute.
- ✓ Delay bathing or showering, shaving, or washing hair for at least 1 hour after getting up in the morning.
- ✓ When bathing, keep the water temperature from being too hot. Get out of the bath slowly.

Low Blood Pressure When Standing Up (Postural Hypotension) - *continued*

Ways to prevent postural hypotension

- ✓ Drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluid each day unless your doctor has told you to limit how much fluid you drink.

[1 glass = 250 mL or 1 cup]

A fluid is any food or drink that is liquid at room temperature. This includes water, ice, milk, juice, soft drinks, hot drinks, ice cream, popsicles, and liquid nutrition supplement drinks (such as Ensure and Boost).

- ✓ Eat small meals. If you are hungry, eat more than 3 small meals a day.
- ✓ If you need to bend over, don't bend down all the way or stand up too quickly.
- ✓ Rock in a rocking chair. The action used by your lower legs to rock the chair will help improve the blood flow from your legs.
- ✓ Choose activities and exercises where you do not need to hold your breath or bear down such as diving or weight lifting.

To learn more, it's good to ask:

- Your family doctor
- HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf and hard of hearing) or go online to www.HealthLinkBC.ca