

Low Blood Pressure When Standing Up Postural Hypotension

Have you ever noticed that you feel light-headed, dizzy, or faint when you change position from lying down or sitting to standing?

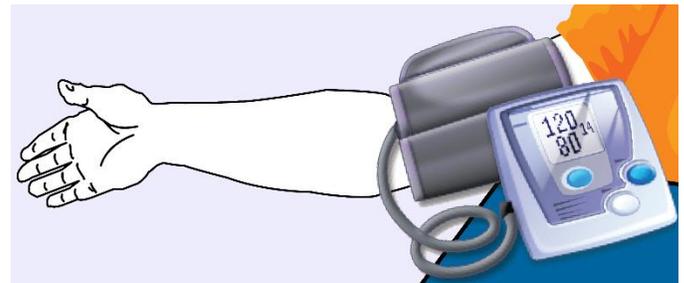
This is a type of low blood pressure. You might hear it called 'postural hypotension' or 'orthostatic hypotension'. 'Postural' or 'orthostatic' means when you change positions. 'Hypotension' (say *hi-po-ten-shun*) means low blood pressure.

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

When is this most likely to happen?

Low blood pressure is most likely to happen:

- 30 to 60 minutes after eating a heavy or large meal
- 1 to 2 hours after taking your blood pressure medication
- right after getting out of bed in the morning
- when straining to have a bowel movement (go pooh) or urinate (go pee)
- with drinking alcohol
- hot shower or bath
- being in hot environments



Checking blood pressure at home

Can this low blood pressure be 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.

Talk to your doctor if:

- You have this happen often, or
- You feel light-headed, dizzy, or faint for longer than a couple of minutes

The doctor might:

- check your heart health
- adjust your medicines
- send you for blood tests
- ask you to check your own blood pressure at home

Ways to prevent postural hypotension

Try not to change positions suddenly.

Pump your ankles or tighten thigh and buttock muscles before sitting up and standing up.

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 tub slowly.

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).

Along with drinking fluid, eat a diet high in fibre to prevent from being constipated.

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.

Ask your doctor if compression stockings are right for you.

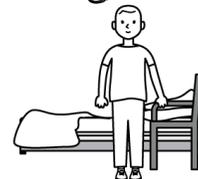
Choose activities and exercises where you do not need to hold your breath or bear down such as diving or weight lifting.

Change your position often. Try not to spend a lot of time in bed.

How to change positions

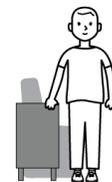
When getting out of bed:

1. Sit on the edge of the bed with your legs over the edge of the bed for 1 minute.
2. 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 or tighten your thigh and buttock muscles for several minutes.
2. Slowly stand up, holding onto a steady object.
3. Stand in one place for at least 1 minute.



To learn more, it's good to ask:

- Your family doctor
- Fraser Health Virtual Care - call 1-800-314-0999 or live chat online at fraserhealth.ca/virtualcare 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., daily
- HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf and hard of hearing) or go online to HealthLinkBC.ca