Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Postural Hypotension (Low blood pressure when you stand up)

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Postural Hypotension (Low Blood Pressure When You Stand Up)

Patient Information

Falls Prevention

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What is Postural Hypotension?

Postural Hypotension is also sometimes called Orthostatic Hypotension, or Postural Drop. It is a condition where the blood pressure falls when changing position from lying to sitting, lying to standing, or sitting to standing.

What causes Postural Hypotension?

There are many possible causes of Postural Hypotension. These include:

- Being dehydrated
- Infection or illness
- Anxiety
- Getting up following a prolonged period of bedrest
- Effects of certain medications
- Surgery
- Eating a large meal
- Some conditions such as Parkinsons Disease

Sometimes there is no cause other than age related changes to the body's normal coping mechanisms.

What are the symptoms of Postural Hypotension?

A fall in blood pressure leads to a reduced blood supply to the brain, muscles, and other organs. Postural Hypotension is strongly linked to a risk of falling. Symptoms may include:

• Dizziness	• Nausea
• Light-headedness	• Palpitations
• Vertigo	• Headache
• Fainting	• Neck and shoulder pain
• Blurred Vision	• Feeling breathless
• Weakness	• Feeling muddled or confused
• Fatigue	

Diagnosing Postural Hypotension

A healthcare professional will measure your blood pressure whilst you are lying down and then again when you are standing up. If your blood pressure drops significantly when you stand up, this indicates Postural Hypotension.

Blood pressure can also be checked in sitting then standing, or in lying then sitting, depending on your condition at the time.

How to manage symptoms of Postural Hypotension

- Drink a glass of water before getting up in the morning.

- Take your time getting out of bed. Your blood pressure is naturally lower first thing in the morning. Move slowly from lying to sitting, then sit with your legs down for a few minutes before standing. Gently ‘marching’ on the spot in sitting will stimulate circulation.

- Avoid sitting or standing for long periods of time.

- Try to eat several small meals rather than one large one. Blood is diverted to help digest your meal, and this may potentially cause symptoms of Postural Hypotension.

- Avoid straining. If you are constipated or struggling to pass urine, straining can cause symptoms of Postural Hypotension.

- Keep hydrated. It is important to drink 6-8 mugs of fluid (3 pints / 1.5 litres) every day to prevent dehydration and Postural Hypotension, unless advised otherwise by a doctor. This can be any non-alcoholic drink. Keeping hydrated is especially important if you have diarrhoea or vomiting.

- Avoid very hot baths or showers.

    - Regular simple exercise such as walking, moving your feet up and down at the ankle, or ‘marching’ on the spot will all stimulate circulation.

Your Doctor, Pharmacist or Advanced Clinical Practitioner may also review your medication and prescribe tablets to increase blood pressure if appropriate. Compression stockings can also be prescribed if appropriate and provided that you are able to manage putting them on.

What should you do if you get symptoms?

- Stop what you are doing
- Sit down / Lie down
- Drink a glass of water
- Get up cautiously when you feel well again



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