

Orthostatic (or Postural) Hypotension

Your blood pressure drops when you change positions

Orthostatic Hypotension

You have orthostatic (or postural) hypotension. This means your blood pressure drops when you:

- sit up after lying down
- stand up after sitting.

This can increase your risk for falling.

Symptoms

Symptoms may include any of the following:

- feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- feeling like you are about to faint or fall
- having headaches
- having blurry or tunnel vision
- feeling out of sorts
- feeling pressure across the back of your shoulders or neck
- feeling like you might throw up
- feeling hot and clammy
- feeling weak
- being fatigued (very tired)
- not having any symptoms.



Talk with your health care provider about how often you should check your blood pressure.

When You May Feel Symptoms

You may feel symptoms when you:

- stand or sit up quickly
- get up in the morning
- eat a large meal or drink alcohol
- exercise
- feel sick or anxious.

Causes

Your health care provider will determine what is causing your blood pressure to drop. Possible causes include:

- taking certain medicines such as antidepressants, diuretics, or medicines to lower blood pressure
- high blood pressure (hypertension)
- diabetes
- heart failure
- Parkinson's disease
- dehydration
- anemia (not enough red blood cells)
- low level of vitamin B12.

Treatment

Your health care provider will talk with you about your health history, medicines, lifestyle, when you notice your symptoms, and any concerns you have.

Together, you will talk about your treatment options.

Questions to Ask Your Health Care Provider

Ask your health care provider if you:

- should keep track of when you have symptoms
- should check your blood pressure and how often
- need to change any of your medicines
- have a health condition that is new or getting worse
- need to make any lifestyle changes.

What You Can Do to Manage Your Symptoms

- Get out of bed slowly. Sit, move to the edge of the bed, then stand.
- Take your time when you stand.
- Try to sit when working in the kitchen, when getting ready, or when doing household chores, like folding laundry.
- Exercise carefully. Avoid sudden movements that cause you to change positions.
- Have something sturdy you can hold when standing up.
- Do not walk if you feel dizzy.
- Eat smaller meals.
- Drink enough water each day or follow your health care provider's advice.
- Consider installing grab bars in your bathroom near the toilet and in the shower. Consider using a shower chair or hand-held sprayer.
- Sleep with extra pillows to raise your head.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you keep having symptoms or if you feel worse.

Adapted from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.