

Postural Hypotension

Postural hypotension is a drop in blood pressure due to a change in body position, most commonly when standing up. This drop in blood pressure causes a temporary reduction in blood flow to the brain.

It is a common problem affecting older people but may also affect younger people occasionally. This leaflet is designed to give you some information and guidance on how to self-manage this condition with some simple advice and exercises.

Causes

Some medications can cause postural hypotension and your GP may need to review your tablets to decide if any of them should be stopped or changed. Some medical conditions can lead to postural hypotension, including Parkinson's disease and Diabetes. Other factors that may contribute to postural hypotension include: not drinking enough; warm temperatures; over-exertion; pregnancy; anxiety, and an ongoing infection.

Symptoms

Symptoms are most common after standing up and can include: dizziness, light headedness, weakness, fainting, feeling sick and heart palpitations. Symptoms can be made worse by dehydration, drinking alcohol, hot temperatures, straining on the toilet, infection or illness. Symptoms may be worse in the morning. Symptoms may be worse after standing still, sitting or lying down for a long time.

Self Help

The following actions may help improve your symptoms:

- Try to avoid standing up suddenly, instead stand-up gradually.
- Try to drink a large glass of cold water before standing up and ensure you are drinking enough during the day.
- Try not to bend over when reaching for something. You should squat with your knees to recover it or obtain a grabber device.
- Try sleeping in a more upright position in bed, with more pillows.
- Avoid excessive alcohol and large meals.
- Exercises can reduce your symptoms (see overleaf).

Seek advice from your GP if:

- Advised by the doctor in the Emergency department.
- Your symptoms do not settle after your review.
- The self-help measures above have not improved your symptoms.

Suggested Exercises

Exercises to do while sitting, before you stand up.

Toe Tapping

Sitting with your feet flat on the floor, lift your toes up with your heel still on the ground, then 'tap' them back onto the ground. Do this for 10 seconds. 3 times.



Heel Lifts

Sitting with your feet flat on the floor, lift your heel off the floor onto your 'tiptoes', then lower your heels back to the ground. Do this for 10 seconds, three times.



Marching on the Spot

Sitting down, march your legs briskly on the spot. Repeat this for 10 seconds, three times.



Leg Extensions

Sitting down with both feet flat on the floor, lift one foot off the floor until your knee is straight. Hold for 10 seconds, then slowly lower your foot back to the floor. Repeat three times, then repeat the exercise with the other leg.



Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.

For additional medical advice, if your symptoms or condition worsens:

Contact your GP

NHS 111:

Get help with your symptoms, NHS111:
Information to help you manage your health:

Telephone 111

<https://111.nhs.uk/>
www.nhs.uk

In an emergency telephone 999

Emergency Department
(A&E)
Alexandra Hospital
Woodrow Drive
Redditch B98 7UB

Tel: 01527 512030

Minor Injury Unit
Kidderminster Hospital
Bewdley Road
Kidderminster DY11
6RJ

Tel: 01562 513039

Emergency Department (A&E)
Worcestershire Royal Hospital
Charles Hastings Way
Worcester WR5 1DD

Tel: 01905 760743