

Postural Hypotension for the Elderly

What is Postural Hypotension?

Postural hypotension is when your blood pressure drops (systolic BP drops at least 20mmHg, or diastolic BP drops more than 10mmHg) when you go from lying down to sitting up, or from sitting to standing.

When your blood pressure drops, less blood will go to your brain and other organs, you may/maynot experience giddiness. This can increase your risk for fall.

There are variety of ways to help you manage postural hypotension and reduce its related adverse events including falls, fracture, functional decline etc.



What are the Symptoms?

These symptoms can differ from person to person, and may include:

- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Feeling about to faint
- Passing out, or falling
- Headaches, blurry or tunnel vision
- Weakness or fatigue



When it might Happen?

- When standing or sitting up suddenly
- After a large meal or alcohol
- During exercise
- When straining on the toilet
- When you are ill
- When you are anxious or panic



What are the Causes?

Postural hypotension can be caused by or linked to:

- Dehydration
- Nausea & vomiting
- Prolonged bed rest
- Diabetes, heart failure, or hardening of the arteries
- Medications, such as diuretics (water pill), antidepressants, or medicines to lower blood pressure (anti-hypertensives)
- Neurological conditions like Parkinson's disease



Managing Postural Hypotension:

1. Drink 1 glass of water on waking up.
2. Drink plenty of water during the day unless you have been told to limit your fluid intake.
3. Take your time when changing position. i.e. Get out of bed slowly. First sit up, sit on the side of the bed, then stand up.
4. Exercise gently before getting up (move your feet up and down and clench and unclench your hands).
5. Try to sit down when washing, showering or working in the kitchen.
6. To put extra pillows to raise your head while sleep at night.



7. Do not walk when you experience the giddiness
8. Wear abdominal binder/ elastic stocking prescribed by your healthcare provider will help improve the condition.
9. Avoid taking very hot baths/ showers.
10. Sit down to pass urine if you have experienced dizziness on standing position.
11. Avoid large meal/alcohol, especially meals contain large amount of carbohydrate if you have postural hypotension after your meal (postprandial hypotension)
12. Tell your doctor about any symptoms.

