

- Have your lying and standing blood pressure checked by your GP or a specialist. Ideally you should be laid down and rested for at least three minutes before it is taken.
- Your current medication may contribute to your symptoms. They may need to be reviewed or altered by a specialist or your GP.

Do not stop taking your current medication unless authorised to do so by your GP or a doctor.

For further information or advice, or if you are worried about the risk of falling and would like an assessment by a falls specialist, please contact the falls office by:

Phone: 01865 903400

Email: oxon.falls@nhs.net

Fax: 01865 262320

What to do if you fall

Stop, think, plan and attract help. Use your care alarm pendant (this only works if worn) or crawl to a telephone or bang on the floor or shout. Try to get up if you can.

Keep warm. Cover yourself with anything to hand, for example a towel, rug, or blanket.

Keep moving. Move the parts of your body that don't hurt to stop pressure on the bony parts.

Concerns and complaints

We aim to provide you with a high quality service at all times. However, if you have any concerns, complaints or comments about your experience of our service then please tell a member of the team or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on freephone 0800 328 7971.

Please contact us if you would like the information in another language or different format.

Arabic يُرجى الاتصال بنا إذا كنتم ترغبون في الحصول على المعلومات بلغة أخرى أو بتسيق مختلف.

Bengali আপনি এই তথ্য অন্য ভাষায় বা আলাদা আকারে পেতে চাইলে অনুগ্রহ করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Urdu اگر آپ یہ معلومات دیگر زبان یا مختلف فارمیٹ میں چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

Chinese 若要以其他語言或格式提供這些資訊，請與我們聯繫

Polish Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, skontaktuj się z nami.

Portuguese Queira contactar-nos se pretender as informações noutro idioma ou num formato diferente.

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
Trust Headquarters
Warneford Hospital
Warneford Lane
Headington
Oxford OX3 7JX

Switchboard: 01865 901 000

Email: enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Website: www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk



Falls prevention

Orthostatic hypotension

A guide to understanding and managing orthostatic hypotension

Orthostatic hypotension

Orthostatic hypotension (also known as postural hypotension) is a fall in blood pressure that occurs when changing position from lying to sitting or sitting to standing.

A fall in blood pressure leads to a reduced blood supply to organs and muscles and can cause a variety of symptoms.

Symptoms

- feeling dizzy and light headed
- feeling nauseous, hot and clammy
- blurring, greying, blacking or tunneling of vision
- feeling vague or muddled
- losing consciousness
- syncope (simple faint)
- pressure across the back of the shoulders or neck
- weakness
- fatigue

These symptoms can vary from person to person.

Orthostatic hypotension may be caused by or associated with certain conditions such as:

- heart failure
- dehydration
- prolonged bed rest
- diabetes
- certain neurological disorders (i.e. Parkinson's disease and some types of dementia)
- autonomic neuropathy
- vitamin B12 deficiency, diabetes, alcoholism
- anaemia
- atherosclerosis

Symptoms are more likely to happen when there is an increased demand on the circulating blood, such as:

- standing or sitting suddenly
- in the morning, when blood pressure is naturally lower
- after large meals or alcohol
- during exercise
- straining on the toilet
- illness (i.e. a cold or infection)
- anxiety and panic

Certain medications may also worsen or cause orthostatic hypotension.

Managing your orthostatic hypotension

- Try sleeping with your head up (use extra pillows).
- Get out of bed slowly and in stages. First sit on the side of the bed before standing. Count to ten before setting off.
- Take your time when changing position i.e. when rising from a chair.
- Make sure you have your walking aid at hand or something to hold on to when standing.
- Try to avoid bending down or stretching up.
- Drink 2 litres (3½ pints) of fluid per day (water, tea, coffee, low-sugar drinks).
- Exercise gently before getting up (moving your feet up and down) or after standing (marching on the spot) to stimulate your circulation.
- If possible sit when washing, showering, dressing or when working in the kitchen.