

Plan ahead – Sleep with your head in an upright position, this can be achieved with an extra pillow. When you get up, take your time, get up slowly, sit for a while moving your feet up and down. Then stand slowly establishing your balance before you move away.

New medication

Ask if your blood pressure will be affected by any new medication. Read the information leaflets that come with your medication. Speak to your pharmacist about any concerns. Some people find spreading their tablets for high blood pressure over the day helps. Consult your GP or pharmacist to discuss this further.

What to do when you get symptoms

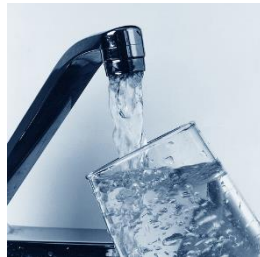
Think of the symptoms as a warning that your blood pressure is too low. The only way to improve your blood pressure is to:

STOP what you're doing.

SIT down.

DRINK some water.

THINK about what triggered your symptoms.



If you get frequent symptoms, please contact your GP surgery for further advice. This may include lying and standing blood pressure monitoring and a review of your medication.

Support hosiery can help improve symptoms; a further assessment would be required to gauge suitability. Ask your practice nurse for advice.

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.

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PATIENT INFORMATION

What is Postural Hypotension

Postural – change in position
Hypotension – fall in blood pressure to a low level (otherwise known as orthostatic hypotension)

Are you on several medications?
Do you have low blood pressure?
Do you get dizzy when you stand up? If so, this leaflet is for you.

Postural Hypotension (PH) or orthostatic hypotension is a fall in blood pressure that occurs when changing position from lying to sitting, sitting to standing or bending down.

Have you had a medication review? Do you have low blood pressure? Do you get dizzy when you stand up? If so, read on...

What are the symptoms of Postural Hypotension?

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

- ❖ Feeling dizzy and light-headed.
- ❖ Changes in vision such as blurring, greying or blacking vision.
- ❖ Feeling vague or muddled.
- ❖ Losing consciousness with or without warning – this is a 'blackout' or 'faint.'
- ❖ Pain across the back of the shoulders and neck - 'coat hanger' pain.
- ❖ Pain in lower back and buttocks.
- ❖ Angina-type pain in the chest.
- ❖ Weakness and fatigue.

These symptoms can vary from person to person.

When are the symptoms likely to happen?

When there is an increased demand on the circulating blood, for example:

- ❖ **Moving** – standing or sitting up suddenly.
- ❖ **In the morning** – blood pressure is naturally lower.
- ❖ **After meals** – as blood is needed by the digestive system. In particular, big meals or sugary foods increase this demand.
- ❖ **Moderate alcohol consumption** also has this effect.



❖ During exercise – **exercise (e.g. walking or gardening) and activity (e.g. dusting) especially when on your feet, increases the demand for blood in the muscles.**

❖ **'Straining'** – on the toilet when you are constipated or have difficulty passing urine.

Improving control of your Postural Hypotension

Preventing constipation

Eat foods with fibre (e.g. cereals and fruit) 5 fruit/vegetables every day.

Drink 3½ pints (2 litres) of fluid every day.



In addition, the following things will make symptoms worse:

- ❖ Being dehydrated.
- ❖ Getting overheated; in a warm room, after a hot bath or on a sunny day.
- ❖ Illnesses such as colds or infections, especially if you need to rest in bed.
- ❖ Anxiety/ panic, especially if it changes your breathing pattern.
- ❖ Medication which may affect Postural Hypotension are: diuretics, antidepressants, pain relieving, heart and blood pressure tablets. This list is not exhaustive. Any concerns please consult your GP or local pharmacy. **Avoid dehydration** - Drink 3½ pints (2 litres) of fluid every day; preferably water. Drink a large glass of water before you get out of bed in the morning.

Avoid getting up quickly and hurrying –

Sit down to do everyday tasks like getting dressed or preparing vegetables

Avoid bending down or stretching up (e.g. hanging out washing) and avoid standing still for long periods of time.