Information for patients with dropping blood pressure

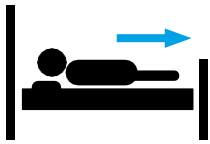
(Orthostatic Hypotension)

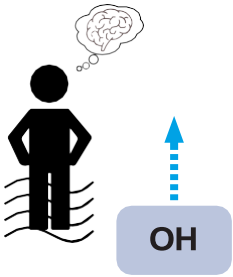
This leaflet provides information and advice for patients who experience symptoms as a result of a drop in blood pressure.

This is medically known as Orthostatic Hypotension (OH).

What is Orthostatic Hypotension (OH)?

When we sit or lie down, blood pools in the legs.

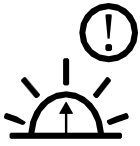




If you have OH, the body is slower to push the blood back up to the brain when you stand.

This may cause dizziness or light headedness. It can cause falls and/or blackouts in some people.

It is therefore important to take care when you stand up.



Symptoms are often worse in the morning or overnight so take care at these times.

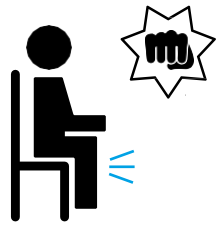
Lots of medications can cause OH, your doctor will review this.

What should I do when I get symptoms?

1

Sit down immediately.

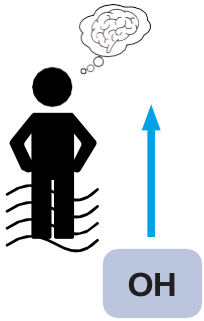
2



Clench and unclench your fists.

Squeeze the muscles in your legs and buttocks.

This helps the blood flow back up to the brain.

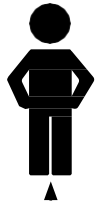


3

If symptoms persist **lie down flat if possible.**

4

Get up **cautiously** when you feel well again, but if you have further symptoms, be prepared to sit down promptly.



What should I do to stop symptoms?

Fluids

Stay well hydrated.

A glass of water before standing can boost the blood pressure.

Exercises

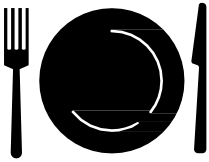
Fist, buttock and calf clenching exercises.

Crossing and uncrossing your legs.

Try these before standing up.

Changing position

Avoid sudden standing from a bending or stooping position. Take your time!



Meals

You may find that your symptoms are worse after a big meal.

If so, try eating smaller, more frequent meals.

Heat

Avoid over heating as this can lower your blood pressure.

Alcohol

Avoid excess alcohol as this drops your blood pressure.

Sometimes compression stockings or medical corsets are used to stop blood collecting in the legs and pelvis.

Your doctor may discuss this with you.

My Medication

Allergies: _____

When do I get symptoms?

Which method prevents me from getting symptoms?

If any questions, contact: