

# Falls Prevention – Postural Hypotension

**Postural hypotension** (or orthostatic hypotension) is when your blood pressure drops when you go from lying down to sitting up, or from sitting to standing. When your blood pressure drops, less blood goes to your organs and muscles. This can make you dizzy and more likely to fall.

**Are you feeling any of these symptoms: dizziness, light-headedness, blurred vision, or feeling about to faint?**

## When do symptoms tend to happen?

- When sitting up or standing up too quickly
- When getting out of bed too quickly
- After a large meal or excessive alcohol drinking
- During exercise
- When you are ill or frail



## What are some of the causes?

- Taking certain medications for blood pressure, heart, mood and Parkinson's disease.
- Dehydration due to not drinking enough fluids, vomiting or diarrhoea.
- Prolonged bed rest.
- Certain conditions e.g. diabetes, heart problems, Parkinson's disease and anaemia.
- Excessive amounts of alcohol.

## What you can do

- **Tell your doctor about your symptoms.**
- Get out of bed slowly. First sit up, then sit on the side of the bed, then stand up.
- Take your time when changing position, such as when getting up from a chair.
- Have something steady to hold onto when you stand up.
- Take it steady when walking or get support if you feel dizzy.
- Exercise gently before getting up (move your feet up and down and clench and unclench your hands) or after standing (march in place).
- Drink 6-8 glasses of water daily, unless you have been told to limit your fluid intake.
- Avoid standing still over a long time.
- Avoid taking very hot baths or showers.
- Try sleeping with extra pillows to raise your head.

Acknowledgement to:

iSOLVE fall prevention partnership project  
(The University of Sydney, Northern Sydney Medicare Local,  
Clinical Excellence Commission)

STEADI Tool Kit from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,  
United States.

For further information scan this with your  
smart phone



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