



PATIENT INFORMATION

# POSTURAL HYPOTENSION



## What is Postural (Orthostatic) Hypotension?

Postural Hypotension is a fall in blood pressure that occurs when a person changes position from lying to standing.

## What other symptoms may I get?

This can result in decreased blood flow to your brain causing a sensation of dizziness or light headedness and sometimes falls or blackouts.



Other symptoms may include general weakness and fatigue, blurred vision, nausea (with or without vomiting) and pain across the back of the shoulders and neck.

## It can be related to:

- Increased age
- Prolonged bed rest
- Prolonged standing
- Eating large high-fat meals
- Exposure to heat
- Drinking alcohol
- Not eating or drinking regularly
- Lack of regular exercise
- Varicose veins
- Anaemia
- Some medication

## What medication can contribute to Postural Hypotension?

- Heart and blood pressure medication
- Medication for mood e.g. antidepressants/antipsychotics
- Parkinson's disease medication

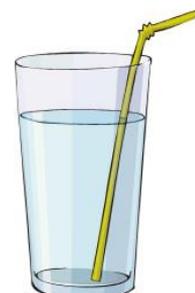
Do not stop taking any medication without discussing with a doctor



## What you can do to help reduce the symptoms of Postural Hypotension?

### DO

- Increase non caffeinated fluid intake to 2 litres (3 ½ pints) per day
- Only drink caffeinated drinks first thing on rising or with/just after daytime meals
- Eat salty snacks (if no history of heart failure)
- Eat several small meals instead of large meals
- Eat high fiber foods
- Elevate head of bed/raise pillows at night
- Exercise regularly; swimming, walking etc.
- Wear daytime compression stockings
- Change position from lying to sitting to standing slowly



## **AVOID**

- Sudden changes to an upright position/posture
- Prolonged sitting/standing still
- Activities which promote straining e.g. lifting heavy objects/constipation

## **Can exercise help postural hypotension?**

Regular cardiovascular and strength exercise such as walking, jogging and swimming may help reduce symptoms of postural hypotension.

If you experience symptoms of postural hypotension the following exercises may help.

Before you stand:

- Move feet up and down at the ankle
- Clench and unclench hands
- Cross and uncross legs
- Stretch arms and legs (limbering exercises)

Once standing:

- Squat, march or raise up and down on tiptoes in place

It is advised that you complete these prior to changing to an upright position/posture.

## **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:-

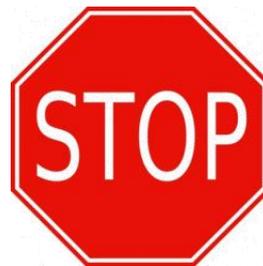
**STOP** what you are doing

**SIT** down - use bus stops, walls, benches

**LIE** down if possible

**DRINK** some water

**THINK** about what has triggered your symptom



If you have frequent symptoms contact your doctor for further advice.

**If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.**

## **Patient Experience**

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

## **Feedback**

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

## **How to contact PALS:**

**Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: [wah-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.PET@nhs.net)**

## **Opening times:**

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.