

Fainting

What is fainting?

Fainting is a temporary loss of consciousness. It happens when you have a sudden fall in blood pressure. This decreases the supply of blood to your brain. Fainting is also called syncope.

Most people know what causes them to faint. These include:

- after standing up from lying down
- during an emotional situation such as being in pain or seeing blood
- after a long period of standing such as in a line or at a reception
- a warm place such as in a sauna, hot shower or hot weather
- after exercise
- after eating a meal or when you have not eaten for a while
- when you have not had enough rest
- during an illness, fever or when you feel nauseous

What are the symptoms of fainting?

The symptoms of fainting include:

- feeling light-headed
- seeing black spots
- loss of consciousness

When you feel these symptoms, sit or lie down right away.

Before, during and after fainting, you may look pale, sweat and feel nauseous. After fainting, you may feel tired for a long time.

What can I do to help prevent fainting?

Fainting is not a serious disease but it can be very annoying and restrict activities for you and the people around you.

Here are ways that can help you prevent fainting:

- Drink 8 to 10 cups (2 to 2½ litres) of water each day.
- Exercise 30 to 45 minutes each day, 4 to 5 times a week.
Do activities such walking or swimming.
- Avoid the situations that cause you to faint.
- Once you recognize the symptoms of fainting, sit or lie down right away.

Other recommendations

For more information

Visit these websites:

- Syncope Trust and Reflex anoxic Seizures (STARS)
www.stars-us.org/
- The Dysautonomia Network www.dinet.org