

Ways to manage lightheadedness whenever you stand up

Why do I feel lightheaded when I stand up?

When you stand up after lying or sitting you may feel lightheaded. This is caused by a sudden drop in your blood pressure. This is more common in people who are 65 years of age or older. The medical name for this is postural or orthostatic hypotension.

If you feel faint, sit down until the feeling passes.

What can I do about it?

There are many things you can do to prevent lightheadedness when you stand up.

These are:

- Avoid fast changes in position.
- Slowly get up after sitting.
- Slowly get out of bed in 4 stages:
 1. while still lying in bed move your feet backwards and forwards as though you are stepping on the car brakes for a few minutes, then
 2. sit up in bed
 3. while sitting on the side of the bed, dangle your legs over the side for 1 minute
 4. stand for 1 minute before walking

It is very important to do these things anytime you are getting up especially when you get up during the night to go to the bathroom.

What can I do to deal with lightheadedness?

- Many people fall and break their hips when going to the bathroom during the night. Please talk with your doctor or nurse if you have to wake up often to use the bathroom at night.
- Talk with your doctor about medications. Some medications may make you lightheaded when you stand up. Your doctor may suggest wearing support stockings during the day. If you do not have high blood pressure, your doctor may recommend putting more salt in your food.
- Talk with your doctor about the benefits of having 1 or 2 cups of coffee or tea in the morning. This helps to increase blood pressure in some adults.
- Alcohol and some medications do not mix. Talk with your doctor about your medications.
- Avoid hot places such as very hot baths and showers, saunas, and hot tubs.
- Have enough fluid in your body. Drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluid everyday.
- Stay active. Walking is good exercise and helps with circulation and blood pressure.
- Your blood pressure may drop after eating. Delay activity for 1 hour after eating a meal. If possible, eat several small meals during the day rather than one heavy meal.
- We recommend sleeping with the head of the bed slightly elevated.
- Move your legs while standing. If you start getting dizzy, cross your thighs and squeeze the thigh muscles. This will help blood circulation.