



Hypotension (Low Blood Pressure)

What is Orthostatic Hypotension?

Orthostatic hypotension is a sudden fall in blood pressure that occurs when a person assumes a standing position. It is due to a lesion of the baroreflex loop, which senses a change in blood pressure and adjusts heart rate and activates sympathetic nerve system fibers to cause the blood vessels to narrow and correct blood pressure. It may also be caused by hypovolemia (a decreased amount of blood in the body), resulting from the excessive use of diuretics, vasodilators, or other types of drugs, dehydration, or prolonged bed rest. The disorder may be associated with Addison's disease, diabetes, and certain neurological disorders including Multiple System Atrophy with Orthostatic Hypotension (formerly known as Shy-Drager syndrome), autonomic system neuropathies, and other dysautonomias. Symptoms, which generally occur after sudden standing, include dizziness, lightheadedness, blurred vision, and syncope (temporary loss of consciousness).

Is there any treatment?

When orthostatic hypotension is caused by hypovolemia due to medications, the disorder may be reversed by adjusting the dosage or by discontinuing the medication. When the condition is caused by prolonged bed rest, improvement may occur by sitting up with increasing frequency each day. In some cases, physical counterpressure such as elastic hose or whole-body inflatable suits may be required. Dehydration is treated with salt and fluids. More severe cases can be treated with drugs, such as midodrine, to raise blood pressure.

Source: National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

Cleveland Clinic: Orthostatic Hypotension

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/9385-low-blood-pressure-orthostatic-hypotension>

Mayo Clinic: Low Blood Pressure

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/low-blood-pressure/DS00590>

Medline Plus: Low Blood Pressure

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/lowbloodpressure.html>

Merck Manual Home Health Handbook: Low Blood Pressure

<http://www.merckmanuals.com/home/heart-and-blood-vessel-disorders/low-blood-pressure-and-shock/low-blood-pressure>

SCI-Info-Pages: Postural (Orthostatic) Hypotension

http://www.sci-info-pages.com/other_issues.html#Postural%20%28Orthostatic%29%20Hypotension

WebMD: Orthostatic Hypotension

<http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/hypotension-orthostatic>

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