

# Orthostatic Hypotension

## What is orthostatic hypotension?

- Orthostatic hypotension occurs when there is a drop of blood pressure upon standing within 3 mins
- To be diagnosed systolic pressure needs to decrease by 20 mmHg and/or diastolic pressure needs to decrease by 10 mmHg
- Neurogenic orthostatic hypotension (nOH) is a form of OH that is caused by neurological conditions and is associated with dysautonomia. There are also non-neurological causes, which can be acute, chronic, or caused by medications. Post-prandial OH (drop in BP after eating) may also occur with dysautonomia
- nOH is seen in several forms of dysautonomia, including baroreflex failure, multiple system atrophy, pure autonomic failure, and autonomic neuropathy

## What are the symptoms?

- Vision changes
- Syncope or pre-syncope
- Light-headedness, dizziness
- Head/neck pain
- Shakiness or tremulousness
- Chest pain/palpitations
- Weakness, fatigue
- Nausea
- Coldness in the extremities
- Brain fog



## How is it diagnosed?

- Tilt table test to help determine type, potentially autonomic reflex tests
- Patient history, including current medications
- Tests that rule out other causes of fainting or symptoms (holter monitors, EKGs, heart echo, etc)

## How is it treated?

- Increase salt and fluid intake
- Avoiding worsening factors, including some medications, alcohol, extreme or prolonged exposure to heat, and excessive exercise or exercise with weights
- Leg compression – usually 30-40 mmHg, abdominal binders
- Elevating the bed at night by 4 inches
- Medications: Florinef, midodrine, Mestinon, desmopressin, droxidopa
- Mild exercise – usually done laying down or in a recumbent position (bicycling, rowing, strength exercises). Swimming or water aerobics, where gravity decreases chances of blood pooling, can also be a good option
- Physical counter maneuvers

For more information visit  
Dysautonomia Support Network:  
<https://www.dysautonomiasupport.org>

Also check out our Patient Handbook for more detailed information:  
[https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/cb5ced\\_c187b013fcec4901aeb15eeffa4a63a9.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/cb5ced_c187b013fcec4901aeb15eeffa4a63a9.pdf)

Additional sources:  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2888469/>

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs00702-017-1791-y>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5506688/>