



## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

# Low Blood Pressure (Hypotension)

Blood pressure is the action of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries with each heart beat. Having low blood pressure—less than 120/80—can be a good thing but having too low of blood pressure can make you feel dizzy and tired and be a symptom of an underlying condition.

Low blood pressure is defined as blood pressure of 90/60 or lower. For some people having low blood pressure for unknown reasons is normal and not usually harmful. This form of hypotension is called chronic asymptomatic hypotension.

Notify your doctor if you are concerned about your blood pressure levels.

## TYPES OF HYPOTENSION

- **ORTHOSTATIC**  
Occurs when transitioning from a sitting or lying down position to a standing position. It is common in people of all ages.
- **POSTPRANDIAL**  
Is a type of orthostatic hypotension, it occurs right after eating. It is more common in older adults, especially those with Parkinson's disease.

- **NEURALLY MEDIATED**  
Occurs after standing for long periods of time. Children more often experience this than adults. Emotionally upsetting events, such as stress and trauma, can also cause this type of hypotension.
- **SEVERE**  
Occurs when your organs do not get the blood and oxygen that they need to properly function. Severe hypotension can be fatal if not treated properly.

## UNDERLYING CAUSES

- Prolonged bedrest
- Pregnancy
- Decrease in blood volume following a major trauma
- Certain medications
- Heart problems
- Endocrine problems
- Severe infection
- Allergic reaction
- Nutritional deficiencies

## SYMPTOMS

- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Nausea
- Fainting
- Dehydration
- Lack of concentration

- Blurred vision
- Cold, clammy, pale skin
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Fatigue
- Depression

## TREATMENT

Treatment will depend on the underlying cause and may include medications for heart disease, diabetes, or infection.

Staying hydrated can help treat and prevent symptoms of neurally mediated hypotension. If you experience low blood pressure while standing for long periods, be sure to take a break to sit down.

Making slow, gradual movements instead of standing up quickly can help prevent symptoms of orthostatic hypotension. You can also avoid symptoms by not crossing your legs while sitting.

Severe hypotension must be treated immediately. Fluids and blood products may be given to increase blood pressure and stabilize vital signs.

Most people can manage and prevent hypotension by understanding the underlying condition behind it. Learn your triggers and do your best to avoid them.

Sources:  
<https://bit.ly/2TzRCgG>  
<https://bit.ly/2UthHOx>