

Fainting

Most episodes of fainting are not due to a serious cause and are referred to as “simple fainting.” Fainting occurs in 15% of teenagers. The most common reasons for fainting include:

- Prolonged standing in one position - commonly occurs at church, graduations, weddings, school assemblies, parades, etc. More likely to occur if a person stands with the knees in a locked position.
- Standing up suddenly (especially after lying down) - this is more likely to cause temporary dizziness. It is more common in the morning after fasting overnight.
- Sudden fearful or disgusting event - seeing someone vomit or bleed or seeing a badly injured person can make someone faint. A public performance (making a speech, music recital) is also a cause.
- Sudden physical pain - Fainting can occur after receiving an injection or having blood drawn.

Warning Signs for Fainting:

- Dizziness, blurred vision, nausea, sweating, feeling cold, decreased hearing or hearing whooshing sounds
- These last 5-10 seconds before passing out
- Person may appear pale before fainting

Predisposing Factors:

- Mild dehydration
- Fasting
- Hot weather
- Sleep deprivation
- Recent illness
- Change in altitude

Prevention:

- When getting out of bed, sit on the edge for a short period before standing. If dizzy, lie down.
- If standing for a long time, repeatedly contract and relax the leg muscles. Don't stand with knees locked.
- Drink plenty of fluids every day and add salty foods to the diet.
- If warning signs of fainting are felt, immediately sit or lie down.

Concerns Related to Fainting - any of the following requires urgent evaluation:

- Onset during exercise
- Associated chest pain or palpitations
- Prolonged loss of consciousness (over 5 minutes)
- Head or face injury from fainting
- No warning signs
- History of heart disease or heart surgery
- Family history of sudden unexplained death before age 35 (including unexplained drowning or car accident).
- Family history of cardiac arrhythmias or prolonged QT

Please call our office if your child has experienced an episode of fainting. If he is unconscious or difficult to awaken after 2 minutes; call 911.