

Lightheadedness or Faintness: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

Lightheadedness is a feeling that you are about to faint or "pass out." You do not feel as if you or your surroundings are moving. It is different from vertigo, which is the feeling that you or things around you are spinning or tilting.

Lightheadedness usually goes away or gets better when you lie down. If lightheadedness gets worse, it can lead to a fainting spell.

It is common to feel lightheaded from time to time. Lightheadedness usually is not caused by a serious problem. It often is caused by a short-lasting drop in blood pressure and blood flow to your head that occurs when you get up too quickly from a seated or lying position.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Lie down for 1 or 2 minutes when you feel lightheaded. After lying down, sit up slowly and remain sitting for 1 to 2 minutes before slowly standing up.
- Avoid movements, positions, or activities that have made you lightheaded in the past.
- Get plenty of rest, especially if you have a cold or flu, which can cause lightheadedness.
- Make sure you drink plenty of fluids, especially if you have a fever or have been sweating.
- Do not drive or put yourself and others in danger while you feel lightheaded.

When should you call for help?



Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You have symptoms of a stroke. These may include:
 - Sudden numbness, tingling, weakness, or loss of movement in your face, arm, or leg, especially on only one side of your body.
 - Sudden vision changes.
 - Sudden trouble speaking.
 - Sudden confusion or trouble understanding simple statements.
 - Sudden problems with walking or balance.
 - A sudden, severe headache that is different from past headaches.
- You have symptoms of a heart attack. These may include:
 - Chest pain or pressure, or a strange feeling in the chest.
 - Sweating.
 - Shortness of breath.

- Nausea or vomiting.
- Pain, pressure, or a strange feeling in the back, neck, jaw, or upper belly or in one or both shoulders or arms.
- Lightheadedness or sudden weakness.
- A fast or irregular heartbeat.

After you call **911**, the operator may tell you to chew 1 adult-strength or 2 to 4 low-dose aspirin. Wait for an ambulance. Do not try to drive yourself.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your lightheadedness gets worse or does not get better with home care.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **X578** in the search box to learn more about "**Lightheadedness or Faintness: Care Instructions**".

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