

Syncope (Fainting)



Cardinal Pediatrics
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What is Syncope?

Syncope is also known as fainting; It is the medical term used when someone loses consciousness. Syncope happens in about 15% of teenagers and most syncope in children and in teens is harmless, but serious causes should be first ruled out by your healthcare provider.

Benign Causes

- Orthostatic or Postural syncope is one of the most common causes and this occurs from standing in one place for too long without moving. This is because Prolonged standing causes less blood to return to the head and brain which can lead to lightheadedness and subsequently syncope.
- Standing up quickly can also cause blood flow and blood pressure changes which can lead to syncope.
- Stress or pain can cause syncope; we call this a vasovagal response. Sometimes individuals pass out when they see blood or get a shot. Although distressing, as long as no injury occurs this type of fainting alone is not dangerous.

Prevention

- Some patients feel “warning signs” before fainting such as: dizziness, nausea, sweating, or feeling cold. Such symptoms usually last about 5-10 seconds before the syncope happens so if you are feeling like this- Sit or Lie down! It is important to protect yourself from injury.
- Stay hydrated. For some people it is very important to drink water and to some eat salty foods to help increase your body’s fluid retention.
- Move your leg muscles during periods of prolonged standing to help prevent dizziness.
- Manage stress by letting your support system be there for you.

Concerning Causes

- Cardiac Syncope: Any fainting that happens during exercise should be investigated immediately.
- It is also very important to discuss any history of exercise related syncope or near syncope with us at any sports physical- it could be life saving!
- Seizures can also cause loss of consciousness and certain types of seizures can be mistaken for simple fainting.
- Choking can also cause loss of consciousness, so it is important to check your child’s airway if unsure of the cause of syncope.
- Concussion or head injury: Any head injury leading to loss of consciousness should be investigated.
- **A return to being alert and awake should happen within 1 minute. If your child does not return to consciousness within 2 minutes that is considered a medical emergency and you should seek care.**



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Remember we are only a phone call away!