

Fainting

Definition:

Fainting is a temporary loss of consciousness from a sudden decrease of blood flow to your brain. An episode usually lasts a few seconds or minutes.

Presyncope (before fainting) symptoms:

- Dizziness, light headedness
- Weakness or nausea
- Blurred vision
- Sweating
- Pale or clammy skin

Causes of fainting:

- Vasovagal syncope: this can occur when a person experiences a stressful event. Examples include the sight of blood, emotional stress, emotional trauma, or pain.
- Hyperventilating (breathing too fast)
- Dehydration or overheating
- Standing up too quickly (orthostatic hypotension)
- Skipping too many meals
- Seizure
- Hypoglycemia
- Head injury
- Abnormal heart rhythm

Treatment:

- Ensure safety of the scene.
- Help the person lie down.
- Elevate his or her legs if possible.
- Check for breathing and pulse. If the person is unresponsive and not breathing normally, begin CPR.
- Check for any injuries.
- Offer cold water and/or food.
- If the person has a seizure, turn his or her head to the side so that his or her tongue does not accidentally block his or her breathing and so that any vomit will not cause choking.
- If there is no rapid improvement send the person to the ER.
- If the person has a head injury, send him or her to the ER.