

Orthostatic Hypotension

This handout explains what orthostatic hypotension is and how to check for it.

What is orthostatic hypotension?

A big change in your blood pressure when you go from laying down to standing up. You may be at higher risk of falling if you have this condition.

Why check orthostatic blood pressures?

This is one way to help find out if you are dehydrated.

Am I at risk?

The following are things that may cause you to have a greater chance of having orthostatic hypotension:

- Age
- Being in bed for a long time
- Medicines
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Some heart conditions

Keeping You Safe in the Hospital

Our goal is to keep you safe during your hospital stay. If you have orthostatic hypotension in the hospital, your team may suggest the following:

- Ask for help before you get up.
- Get up slowly.
- Drink fluids. **Be sure to ask your team if you have limits on how much you can drink.**
- Raise the head of your bed 10-20 degrees.
- Learn about your health conditions and medicines.
- Ask your health care team about walking in your room and the halls to stay active.
- Do not take hot showers early in the morning.

- Think about using a chair in the shower.
- Wear support stockings to help with swelling in your legs.
- Your team may wish to check your blood pressure often.

How to Stay Safe When You Go Home

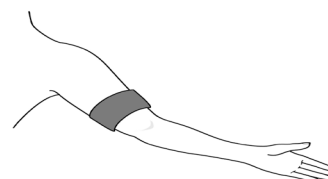
Be sure to ask for help when needed. Use equipment to help you move around and in the shower if needed. Ask your health care team about medicines that may put you at risk for changes in your blood pressure.

Tips for Using Your Automatic Blood Pressure Machine

Take your blood pressure at a time that you feel relaxed and comfortable. Do not talk, watch TV, or look at your phone/tablet during the blood pressure test.

To take your blood pressure:

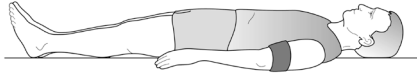
1. Roll up your sleeve or take off your shirt to expose your upper arm.
2. Wrap the blood pressure cuff around your upper arm so that the lower edge of the cuff is about 1 inch above the bend of your elbow.



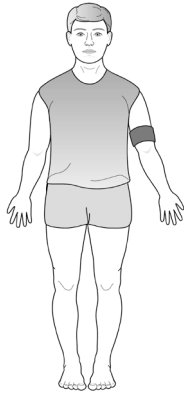
3. Press the on/off button on the automatic monitor and wait until the ready symbol or message appears next to zero in the display window.

Checking Orthostatic Vital Signs at Home

1. Start by lying flat for at least 5 minutes.



2. After 5 minutes, use your automatic blood pressure cuff to take your blood pressure while still lying flat.
3. When your blood pressure appears on the machine, write down this number. Slowly move to a standing position.



4. Once standing for 1 minute, take your blood pressure again and write down this number.
5. Keep standing. After 3 minutes take your blood pressure once more. Write down this number.

If you begin to feel any of the following symptoms, sit down right away and call your provider:

- Dizzy
- Weak
- Blurred vision
- Headache
- Nausea
- Fatigue
- Heart beating fast

How often should I check my blood pressure?

Once a day. Your nurse can help you find a time that works best for you.

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 12/2018. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#8019

Date	Laying	HR	Standing 1 minute	HR	Standing 3 minutes	HR	Date	Laying	HR	Standing 1 minute	HR	Standing 3 minutes	HR

Please call _____ if you have any of the following.
 Systolic (top number) change: **Greater than 20**
 Diastolic (bottom number) change: **Greater than 10**
 Heart Rate change: **Greater than 15 beats per minute**