What should I eat or drink to stop this happening?

- Try to keep hydrated by drinking two to three litres of non-caffeinated fluids a day e.g. water, squash. Try to drink at least one litre in the first few hours of the day.
- Limit your caffeine intake to no more than three cups of coffee, tea or coke a day.
- Avoid drinking above the recommended alcohol limit. Alcohol can dehydrate you making your symptoms worse.
- Eat regular meals.

Where can I get more information?

Ask your GP or contact the Falls Service at Moorlands Day Unit South Tyneside District Hospital
Tel: 0191 404 1052
Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

We are committed to raising the standard of written information for patients, their carers, people who use the NHS and the general public. This information can be made available in another format or language on request. For further copies of this leaflet please contact on telephone numbers above.

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**What is vasovagal syncope?**

This is the term used to describe one of the most common causes of fainting. Pooling of blood in your legs as a result of gravity causes your blood pressure to drop. This means less blood is getting to your brain which may lead to dizziness, falls and blackouts.

Vasovagal syncope is not life threatening and usually gets better with simple measures but it is possible that you may injure yourself during a fall or blackout.

**What are the symptoms?**

You may feel dizzy, look pale, feel sweaty or sick or develop blurred vision. You may notice sounds becoming distant. You might fall or blackout.

**How is it diagnosed?**

It can be diagnosed based on your symptoms alone. However in some cases an investigation called a tilt table test is needed. If your doctor feels that you need this they will talk to you about it and provide you with some written information.

**What causes vasovagal syncope?**

Your risk of fainting can be increased by

- Dehydration
- Medication – your doctor will review your medications and stop any that may be contributing to your symptoms
- Standing still for long periods of time
- Emotional distress or stressful situations
- Seeing blood or having injections
- Eating a large meal
- Warm environments
- Straining, such as when opening your bowels or passing urine

**What should I do if I feel dizzy or faint?**

If you act quickly you can prevent yourself from fainting. You should:

- Lie down IMMEDIATELY – sit down if you are unable to lie down
- If possible lie down with your feet and legs raised higher than the rest of your body
- Clench and unclench your fists and calf muscles or rock forwards on the balls of your feet if you are seated and unable to lie down. Tensing your muscles in this way will help blood flow and help increase your blood pressure
- Stand up slowly and carefully. If you still feel faint repeat the above steps

**How can I stop this happening?**

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Avoid standing in the same position for long periods of time, for example in queues, on public transport or at religious ceremonies. Sit on a chair if possible
- If you do have to stand, then clench and unclench your calf muscles or rock forwards on the balls of your feet to encourage blood flow and raise your blood pressure
- Avoid sudden changes in your position. Take your time getting up from your bed or chair and pause between changes in your position, especially in the morning after you have been lying down overnight
- Your doctor may give you compression stockings that you should wear as and when directed
- Your symptoms may be worse when you are unwell so it is really important that you drink plenty of fluids when you have diarrhoea, vomiting or flu like illness