



## PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUTS

### Fainting (Syncope)

#### What is fainting?

Fainting (syncope) is defined as falling down and being unconscious for a short time (usually less than 1 minute). The 4 most common causes are sudden stress (for example, seeing a bad accident), severe pain, prolonged standing in one position with the knees locked, or sudden standing up (especially after bed rest). Children who have fainted from such causes recover quickly after lying down for a few minutes.

Children who faint while playing sports should be checked by their healthcare provider to make sure they don't have a heart problem.

#### How can I take care of my child?

Have your child lie down for 10 to 15 minutes with his feet elevated. Put a cold washcloth on his forehead. Offer your child a glass of fruit juice after he is conscious. If the fainting was due to stress or fear, help your child talk about it. Smelling salts are unpleasant and not needed.

#### How can I help prevent fainting?

To prevent recurrent fainting, make sure your child drinks lots of water and gets enough salt in his diet every day.

To prevent fainting caused by standing too long, explain to your child that keeping the knees locked interferes with recirculation of the blood. If your child must stand for long periods of time, he should pump the blood by repeatedly relaxing and retightening the leg muscles.

To prevent fainting that occurs when your child stands up suddenly, make sure your child sits up and takes some deep breaths before standing up.

Also, feeling faint at any time or place is a warning to sit or lie down quickly.

#### When should I call my child's healthcare provider?

Call IMMEDIATELY if your child faints.

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Written by B.D. Schmitt, M.D., author of "Your Child's Health," Bantam Books.

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