

What Is Vasovagal Syncope?

A Guide for Teens Who Feel Dizzy or Faint

What Does Syncope Mean?

Syncope (pronounced sin-ko-pee) is the medical word for fainting or passing out. When you feel like you might faint but don't, it's called near syncope.

Vasovagal syncope is the most common kind of fainting, especially in healthy teens. It's usually not dangerous, but it can be scary and frustrating.

Why Does Fainting Happen?

Your body needs a steady blood pressure to keep blood flowing to your brain. But sometimes, especially when you stand for a while, get overheated, or feel stressed, your blood pressure drops too low.

This can happen because:

- Your blood vessels relax too much.
- Your heart rate slows down instead of speeding up.
- Your brain doesn't get enough blood.

When it happens, you might feel dizzy, see spots, feel sick to your stomach, or even faint

It's kind of like your brain hits the reset button. When you fall or lie down, blood flows back to your brain, and you wake up feeling better.

What Causes This?

Your body's autonomic nervous system (which controls things like your heart rate and blood pressure without you thinking about it) gets a little mixed up. It doesn't send the "get moving!" signal when it should. Instead of tightening your blood vessels and raising your heart rate, it does the opposite.

Warning Signs Before Fainting

These are called pre-syncope symptoms. You might experience the following:

- Dizzy or lightheaded
- Nauseous
- Blurry vision or tunnel vision
- Sweaty or clammy
- Buzzing in your ears
- Feeling like the room is spinning
- Weak or shaky
- Pale or grayish skin

If you notice these early signs, you can **SIT DOWN** or lie down before you faint!



How Can I Prevent It?

- Stay hydrated.
 - Drink lots of water every day. Aim for 80 to 100 ounces.
 - Your urine should be light yellow or clear.
 - Avoid caffeine – it can make you pee more and dry you out.
- Eat more salt.
 - Salt helps your body hold on to water and keeps blood pressure up.
 - A great source of salt is sports drinks like Gatorade or Pedialyte.



What To Do If You Feel Faint

Start antigravity maneuvers. These actions help push blood back to your brain:

- Sit down or do a low squat.
- Cross your legs while standing and squeeze your thighs.
- Tighten your stomach muscles and hold.
- Wiggle your fingers and toes.
- Lie on your back with your knees bent.

Keep doing these until you feel better. If you faint, don't panic, you'll wake up quickly once you're flat and blood gets back to your brain.

In Summary:

- Vasovagal syncope is a common, usually harmless cause of fainting.
- It happens when your blood pressure drops, and your brain doesn't get enough blood.
- You can often prevent it by staying hydrated, eating salty foods, and acting fast when you feel early symptoms.
- Tell your doctor if you faint often, or if you have questions – they can help!