

Managing Syncope

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Neurology

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Agenda

- What is syncope?
- Frequently Asked Questions
 - What to do if I encounter a person with syncope?
 - Should I order a brain MRI, EEG test, or refer them to Neurology clinic?
 - Does syncope need to be treated with anti-seizure medication?
 - What non-medication options do I have to treat syncope?





What is syncope?



Syncope

- Syncope is used to describe a loss of consciousness for a short period of time. It can happen when there is a sudden change in the blood flow to the brain.
- Syncope is usually called 'fainting' or 'passing out'. Syncope can happen in healthy subjects. It affects all ages. People affected will slowly return to normal.



Symptoms Associated with Syncope

- Feeling dizzy
- Feeling lightheaded
- Palpitation
- Feeling like they have to vomit
- Vision that becomes unclear or blacks out
- Cold or clammy skin





What to do if I encounter a person with syncope?



What to do if I encounter a person with syncope?

- The first thing to look for is that the person is still breathing after they faint.
- The individual should lie down flat for 10 to 15 minutes if they can in a cool, quiet area.
- If this is not possible, they should sit up with their head between their knees.
- Sipping on cold water can also help. People tend to recover within a few minutes.





Should I order a Brain MRI, EEG test, or refer them to neurology clinic?



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- MRI and EEG are usually **not needed** for patients with syncope.
- Evaluating the patient for lifestyle risk factors and identifying triggers specially those causing stress/anxiety helps mitigate these symptoms.
 - Referral to a psychologist and therapy can often be beneficial for patients experiencing stress/anxiety





Does syncope need to be treated with anti-seizure medication?



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- No, we **do not** treat patients with syncope with anti-seizure medication as the underlying cause is not due to epileptic discharges (seizures) from the brain.
- Syncope occurs due to factors causing inadequate cerebral perfusion, e.g., low blood pressure.





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- Emphasis should be given on healthy lifestyle modifications that include:
 - Good hydration
 - Avoiding caffeinated and sugary beverages
 - Avoiding prolonged periods of fasting (don't skip meals),
 - Added salt in diet can help improve low blood pressure
- Consider a cardiology referral if symptoms prevail despite conservative measures.



THANK YOU!

For additional information, please visit our web page:

<https://www.choa.org/medical-professionals/referrals-and-transfers/directory-of-services/neurosciences-resources>

For specific questions regarding your patient, you may also call 404-785-DOCS (3627) and ask to speak with the on-call neurologist.

