



Web Site: <http://evans.carson.amedd.army.mil/Peds/index.htm>

PEDIATRIC CLINIC PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUTS

Fainting (Syncope)

DESCRIPTION

Fainting (syncope) is defined as falling down and being unconscious for a short time (usually less than 1 minute). The four 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.

HOME CARE

1. First aid

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.

2. Prevention

To prevent fainting that results from prolonged standing, 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.

CALL YOUR CHILD'S PHYSICIAN IMMEDIATELY IF:

(1-888-887-4111 after hours)

- Your child remains unconscious for more than 1 to 2 minutes.
- There is shaking of the extremities, rolling of the eyes or loss of bowel or bladder control.
- Fainting episodes are associated with exercise.