

## What is it?

Syncope is the medical term for fainting, or passing out. It is often caused by low blood pressure or orthostatic hypotension, when the heart doesn't pump enough blood to the brain. It is usually harmless but can be a sign of an underlying medical condition.

It is important to note that becoming unconscious due to a stroke, head injury, heart attack or due to low blood sugar is NOT syncope. If the person does not regain consciousness, promptly start CPR and seek emergency medical care.



### Stroke Prevention Clinic

Saskatoon:

P: 306-655-6802 | F: 306-655-6803

Regina:

P:306-766-3959 | F: 306-766-3968

<b>F</b>	<b>ACE</b>	Is it drooping?
<b>A</b>	<b>RMS</b>	Can you lift them?
<b>S</b>	<b>PEECH</b>	Is it slurred?
<b>T</b>	<b>IME</b>	Time to call 9-1-1

#### For More Information

Cleveland Clinic. (2022, Nov 3). *Syncope*. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/17536-syncope>



# Syncope

## Stroke Prevention Clinic



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Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan



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## Symptoms

There are a variety of symptoms that you may experience before fainting, called **pre-syncope**. These can include:

- sweating, clamminess
- tunnel vision
- pale skin
- lightheadedness
- blurred vision
- feeling warm

Once you faint, others around you may notice abnormal jerking movements. These movements are not unusual.

## Causes

There are 3 possible causes of syncope:

- **Cardiac syncope:** an irregular heart condition or vascular condition
- **Orthostatic hypotension:** a sudden drop in blood pressure, usually due to standing
- **Reflex syncope:** your body's over reaction to a sudden trigger. These triggers can include:
  - emotional distress
  - seeing blood
  - sudden unexpected trauma
  - coughing, sneezing
  - straining

## Diagnosis

Your doctor may want to check your heart to ensure it is functioning properly. These tests may include:

- **Echocardiogram:** ultrasound of the heart
- **Holter monitor:** a monitor you wear at home that continuously monitors



Image courtesy of Microsoft Clip Art

your heart rate and rhythm

*The Saskatchewan Health Authority works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Saskatchewan as the traditional territory of First Nations and Métis People.*

## Treatment

Syncope is usually an isolated event, or it does not occur that often. For this reason alone, syncope often is not treated and resolves on its own. Treatment, if any, will be determined by the cause of syncope.

- **Cardiac syncope:** if your heart is causing the episodes, you may be eligible for a pacemaker or ablation. You will be referred to a specialist called a cardiologist, who will determine what is right for you.
- **Orthostatic hypotension:** sometimes a medication may be prescribed to help with episodes of low blood pressure.
- **Reflex syncope:** avoiding known triggers

**If at any time you are concerned about your symptoms, or they are unusual for you, please seek medical attention.**