The Nurse Led Syncope / PoTS Clinic

Information for patients
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals
Why have I got an appointment for this clinic?
Your GP or another doctor will have referred you to this clinic because they feel that you have had a blackout(s) or because you are thought to have Postural Tachycardia Syndrome.

What is syncope (blackouts)?
Syncope (also called fainting or passing out) is a temporary loss of consciousness and posture due to a sudden drop in blood flow to the brain. It is a common problem, both in young and older people.

What is postural tachycardia syndrome?
Postural tachycardia syndrome (PoTS) is an abnormal increase in heart rate after sitting or standing up. It is caused by autonomic dysfunction, i.e. by a problem with the functioning of your involuntary nervous system. There is a drop in blood supply to the heart and brain when you become upright and the heart races to compensate for this. It typically causes dizziness, fainting, palpitations, sweating and other symptoms.

A diagnosis of PoTS is made if;

- Your heart rate increases by 30 beats per minute (bpm) (40bpm in those aged 12 to 19) after 10 minutes of standing
- Or if the heart rate increases to more than 120 bpm (The heart rate increase must be sustained)

What do I need to bring with me?
- Please fill out the STARS blackouts checklist and bring it with you.
• Please could you also bring a list of your medications and any results of tests which may be available to you.

**What will happen after my appointment?**

After the initial clinic visit the following may happen:

• A decision will be made as to whether you need to be seen by a doctor, continue being seen by the nurse specialists, or whether you should be discharged.
• Appointments will be sent to you for appropriate tests.
• You may be asked to increase the amount of fluids and/or salt you take, the nurse will inform you of this during your initial appointment.
• You will be sent a letter regarding any further appointments through the post.
• At the follow up appointment we will assess whether any lifestyle changes have made a difference to your symptoms. We will also discuss the results of any tests we have done. Test results are not routinely sent to your GP until after this appointment.

**What should I do if I feel dizzy or faint?**

Act quickly, as soon as you feel your symptoms coming on:

• Sit down immediately
• If possible, lie down flat
• Put your legs in the air, for example against a wall
• When you feel well again, get up cautiously. However, if you have further symptoms you may need to lie down again
Will I be able to drive?

We will discuss driving with you at your appointment. The DVLA guidelines are very clear with regards to those that suffer from blackouts and whether they may continue to drive.

**We will always advise patients to not drive and notify the DVLA based on this guidance.**

Contact details

Clinic telephone number:

- 0114 226 9184

Please be aware that this is an answerphone service. Messages are checked once a day by our nurse specialists and responded to in priority order.

If your call is about an appointment, please call:

- 0114 271 4047