

# Fall Prevention with Orthostatic Hypotension

## What is Orthostatic Hypotension?

Orthostatic hypotension is a name given to a common condition where, upon getting up too quickly, you get that light-headed, fuzzy or dizzy feeling.

Orthostatic refers to your body in an upright position. Hypotension refers to low blood pressure.<sup>1</sup>

Orthostatic hypotension has many causes. Sometimes medicines such as a diuretic (water pill) or antihistamines (products to stop runny noses and watery eyes) may make you dizzy. Blood pressure medications may also cause this condition. Water loss due to vomiting or diarrhea, excessive sweating or poorly managed diabetes may also increase dizziness upon standing.<sup>1</sup>

This condition is not a disease but a temporary decrease in blood supply to the upper part of your body. In some cases it results in fainting.<sup>1</sup>

## The risk of falling

Rising too quickly to answer the telephone or a knock at the door may cause you to see stars, lose your balance or fall. If you take warfarin, (brand name Coumadin<sup>®</sup>) and suffer a fall, you are at increased risk for a potentially dangerous bleeding event and not even know it. A bruise, particularly to your head is considered a medical emergency.

## Safety tips to reduce dizziness & falls

When you need to stand, rise slowly. Use a handrail, chair, walker or table and count to 10 before you walk. This will allow your body to regulate your blood pressure and reduce dizziness helping you to prevent a fall.

Let the phone ring. The knock at your door can wait until your head is clear and you can move about safely.

## Contact your doctor if you have any dizziness

For more information on improving your safety, visit **www.PTINR.com** or call **1-877-262-4669**



WellLife: A guide for living on warfarin  
is brought to you by Alere<sup>TM</sup> Home Monitoring

1. Berkow, R. The Merck Manual of Information. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc. 1997. p. 118-119.