



What is syncope?

Also known as fainting or a blackout, syncope is an abrupt and short-term loss of consciousness and motor tone. It's often caused by a sudden drop in blood flow to the brain or a lack of oxygen to the brain and then followed by complete and often rapid spontaneous recovery.

This happens because the brain and body need a steady flow of oxygen-rich blood. Our heart rate and blood pressure change to keep that flow steady throughout all our activities. The heart makes electrical signals that set the heart rate and tell the heart when to pump blood.

The brain may also trigger changes in heart rate and blood pressure. Sensors in the body detect blood flow to the brain and body.

If low, they signal the body to increase the heart rate and fluid in the blood vessels for more circulation, supplying additional oxygen and nutrients to the brain.

Syncope often happens suddenly. Warning signs include:

- Dimmed, blackened, or tunnel vision
- Lightheadedness
- Sleepiness
- Rapid heartbeat

Some children and adults may also feel nauseated or sweaty, or may have no warning signs at all. After syncope, most get better quickly, but some may feel tired. Those old enough to drive should not do so if having warning signs.

Is it serious?

Syncope is a common problem with many possible causes. Often these causes are not serious. It can be caused by standing for too long or sitting up too fast. In some cases, your child may never faint again. But syncope with a heart problem can be a warning sign of a more serious issue, so a health care provider may order several tests to look at heart function and rhythm.

Even if the cause of syncope is not serious, there is a risk of injury from falling with loss of consciousness. When possible, finding a cause can reduce this risk. If your child has had syncope, talk with your health care provider.

Source: The StayWell Company, LLC.

For more information, visit
[cardinalglennon.com](https://www.cardinalglennon.com)

