

Fainting

Fainting is a brief loss of consciousness. It can last from seconds to 30 minutes. Just before fainting, a person may feel a sense of dread, feel dizzy, see spots, and have nausea. If a person falls and can't remember the fall itself, he or she has fainted. An unconscious person is hard to arouse and can't be made aware of his or her surroundings. The person is unable to move on his or her own.

Causes

Fainting is due to a sudden drop in blood flow or glucose supply to the brain. This causes a temporary drop in blood pressure and pulse rate.

Medical reasons for this include:

- Low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). This can occur in diabetics, in early pregnancy, in persons on severe diets, etc.
- Anemia. Eating disorders.

Conditions which cause rapid loss of blood.

- Abnormal heart rhythm.
- Heart attack.
- Stroke.
- Head injury.
- Heat stroke.
- Heat exhaustion.

Other things that can lead to feeling faint or fainting include:

- A sudden change in body position like standing up too fast. This is called postural hypotension.
- A side effect of some medicines.
- Drinking too much alcohol.
- Anxiety or sudden emotional stress or fright.
- Being in hot, humid weather or in a stuffy room.
- Standing a long time in one place.
- Extreme pain.

Treatment

Depends on the cause