Postural Tachycardia Syndrome

Postural tachycardia syndrome (POTS) is a disorder characterized by a pulse rate that is too fast when the patient stands.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms include:

- Rapid heartbeat.
- Headache.
- Chronic fatigue.
- Chest pain.
- Lightheadedness with prolonged standing.
- Other nonspecific complaints.

Causes of POTS usually are not identified in individual patients. Reversible causes such as low blood volume should be ruled out.

TREATMENT

Treatment of POTS depends upon the severity of the symptoms. Individuals with the disorder are usually advised to increase their fluid and salt intake. Body stockings may provide some relief. Drug therapy may be beneficial. Physical exercise, especially calf muscle resistance training, also may help. Some patients may require and benefit from insertion of a cardiac pacemaker.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN

The prognosis for individuals with POTS varies. Many patients improve with treatment, although severe POTS can be disabling for years. The disorder is not thought to progress to a cardiac disease.

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