Syncope (Fainting Episode)

You have had a fainting (*syncopal*) spell. A fainting episode is a sudden, short-lived loss of consciousness. It results in complete recovery. It occurs because there has been a temporary shortage of oxygen and/or sugar (*glucose*) to the brain.

CAUSES

- Blood pressure pills and other medications that may lower blood pressure below normal. Sudden changes in posture (sudden standing).
- Over medication. Take your medications as directed.
- Standing too long. This can cause blood to pool in the legs.
- Seizure disorders.
- Low blood sugar (*hypoglycemia*) of diabetes. This more commonly causes coma.
- Bearing down to go to the bathroom. This can cause your blood pressure to rise suddenly. Your body compensates by making the blood pressure too low when you stop bearing down.
- Hardening of the arteries where the brain temporarily does not receive enough blood.
- Irregular heart beat and circulatory problems.
- Fear, emotional distress, injury, sight of blood, or illness.

Your caregiver will send you home if the syncope was from non-worrisome causes (*benign*). Depending on your age and health, you may stay to be monitored and observed. If you return home, have someone stay with you if your caregiver feels that is desirable.

It is very important to keep all follow-up referrals and appointments in order to properly manage this condition. This is a serious problem which can lead to serious illness and death if not carefully managed.

WARNING: Do not drive or operate machinery until your caregiver feels that it is safe for you to do so.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have another fainting episode or faint while lying or sitting down. DO NOT DRIVE YOURSELF. Call 911 if no other help is available.
- You have chest pain, are feeling sick to your stomach (*nausea*), vomiting or abdominal pain.
- You have an irregular heartbeat or one that is very fast (pulse over 120 beats per minute).
- You have a loss of feeling in some part of your body or lose movement in your arms or legs.
- You have difficulty with speech, confusion, severe weakness, or visual problems.
- You become sweaty and/or feel light headed.

MAKE SURE YOU ARE RE-CHECKED AS INSTRUCTED.

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