



Low Blood Pressure in Parkinson's Disease

Understanding Orthostatic Hypotension and Practical Ways to Stay Safe and Steady

Parkinson's affects the **autonomic nervous system**, which controls automatic body functions like heart rate and blood pressure regulation. When these signals are disrupted, the body may struggle to adjust blood pressure quickly during position changes.

Contributing factors may include:

- Impaired autonomic signaling
- Parkinson's medications
- Dehydration
- Prolonged standing
- Heat exposure
- Illness or infection

Symptoms may fluctuate and are often worse during medication "off" periods or when fatigued.

Common Symptoms of Low Blood Pressure

Symptoms may include:

- Dizziness or lightheadedness when standing
- Feeling faint or weak
- Blurred vision
- "Black spots" or dimming of vision
- Fatigue
- Unsteadiness or falls

Symptoms may be brief—or persistent—and can vary throughout the day.

Understanding Orthostatic Hypotension

Orthostatic hypotension is typically defined as:

- A significant drop in blood pressure within minutes of standing

Diagnosis may involve:

- Blood pressure measurements while lying down, sitting, and standing
- Symptom review
- Medication evaluation

Diagnosis is based on patterns—not a single reading.

Practical Home Strategies to Manage Low Blood Pressure

Change Positions Slowly

- Sit at the edge of the bed before standing
- Pause after standing before walking
- Avoid sudden movements

Slowing transitions gives the nervous system time to adjust.

Hydration Is Essential

- Drink fluids regularly throughout the day
- Increase intake during heat or illness (as advised by your provider)

Dehydration worsens low blood pressure.

Support Blood Pressure Naturally

Helpful strategies may include:

- Wearing compression stockings or abdominal binders

- Elevating the head of the bed slightly
 - Avoiding large, heavy meals that divert blood flow
 - Eating smaller, more frequent meals
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Reduce Triggers

- Avoid prolonged standing
- Be cautious in hot environments
- Limit alcohol
- Avoid straining during bowel movements

Managing constipation often improves blood pressure stability.

Medication Considerations

Some Parkinson's and non-Parkinson's medications can worsen low blood pressure.

Your provider may:

- Adjust Parkinson's medication timing or dose
- Review blood pressure medications
- Prescribe medications to raise blood pressure if needed

Never stop or adjust medications without medical guidance.

Safety Strategies to Reduce Fall Risk

Helpful steps include:

- Use handrails when standing
- Keep pathways clear
- Use nightlights for nighttime trips
- Sit down if dizziness occurs
- Ask for help during high-risk moments

Sitting down at the first sign of dizziness prevents injury.

When to Contact Your Care Team

Reach out if you experience:

- Frequent dizziness or fainting
- Falls or near-falls
- Symptoms interfering with daily life
- New confusion or weakness
- Symptoms that worsen suddenly

Low blood pressure is treatable—and early management improves safety.

Living Confidently With Low Blood Pressure

Many people with Parkinson's learn to manage low blood pressure successfully with awareness and routine adjustments.

Stability comes from understanding your body and responding early—not pushing through symptoms.

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