

Pain Management

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Fort Worth, Texas 76104

POTS

Postural: Position of body, such as sitting or standing.

Orthostatic: Blood pressure falls when suddenly standing up from a lying or sitting position.

Tachycardia: Fast heartbeat.

Autonomic nervous system and POTS

POTS is caused by an imbalance of the autonomic nervous system.

Autonomic nervous system: Part of our nervous system that controls *involuntary actions* in our body such as heart rate, blood pressure, and digestion.

Made up of the *parasympathetic* and *sympathetic* nervous system.

- Sympathetic:** Responsible for speeding up and controlling our body during stressful situations, such as an emergency, injuries, or perceived threats.
- Parasympathetic:** Responsible for resting our body. Controls our body's responses at rest.

Body Part	Parasympathetic	Sympathetic
Heart rate	Slows down	Speeds up
Blood Pressure	Lowers	Raises
Pupils	Constricts	Dilates
Eyes	Become dry	Become watery
Mouth	Waters	Drys
Lungs	Slow breathing	Fast breathing
Digestion	Increases	Decreases
Bladder	Contracts	Relaxes

When something goes wrong with the autonomic nervous system, the most basic actions and feelings become difficult and unsafe.

When you stand up: Gravity pulls blood down into your lower body. The brain senses this sudden loss of blood:

- The heart beats faster and blood pressure rises.
- The blood vessels in your lower body constrict to force more blood up to your brain.

With POTS, after you stand up:

- Heart beats faster but blood pressure may drop.
- Blood vessels in lower body do not constrict, so the blood doesn't reach your brain.
- The brain tells your heart to keep beating fast.

This can make you feel dizzy, faint, and lightheaded. Sitting or lying down helps you feel better.

Cause of POTS is unknown

Symptoms can start after:

- Onset of puberty
- Trauma
- Viral illness such as Mononucleosis
- Pregnancy
- Major surgery

POTS Symptoms Vary

- Heart palpitations
- Fast heart rate
- Dizziness
- Fainting or passing out
- Lightheadedness
- Poor sleeping at night
- Blurred vision
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Difficulty concentrating
- Diarrhea or constipation

Treatment for POTS

Treatment focuses on lifestyle changes and medicine.

Changes include:

- Increased fluids
- Eating more salt
- Sleep hygiene
- Psychological support
- Exercise
- Pacing activities
- Postural awareness

If lifestyle changes are not working, your doctor may suggest medicine.

These instructions are only general guidelines. Your health care providers may give you special instructions. If you have any questions or concerns, please call your health care providers.

The healthcare provider talked to me about the information in this handout.

- I know what I need to do.
- I know why doing this is important.
- All my questions have been answered.
- I have a copy of this handout.

Patient Name

Patient, Parent, or Legally Authorized Representative

Printed Name

Signed Name

Your Relationship to the Patient

Date

Time a.m. / p.m.

_____ **For staff use only** _____

Postural-Orthostatic-Tachycardia-Syndrome-POTS

Healthcare Provider

MRN (Medical Record Number)

Printed Name

Signed Name

Date

Time a.m. / p.m.

Interpreter

Printed Name

Signed Name

Interpreter Number

Date

Time a.m. / p.m.

Print or imprint Patient Information

MRN _____

CSN _____