

Emergency department

Fainting

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

We have given you this leaflet because you have had an episode of vasovagal syncope, more commonly known as fainting.

What is fainting?

Fainting happens when a trigger causes your heart to slow down and your blood pressure to fall. This causes a temporary interruption of blood supply to your brain.

Triggers can include:

- sudden pain
- heat
- sneezing or coughing
- passing urine
- not eating or drinking enough

Fainting is not a serious or life-threatening condition.

What are the symptoms?

You may:

- look pale
- feel lightheaded
- feel like vomiting
- experience blurred vision

How do I stay safe?

You should avoid any obvious triggers such as hot places or not eating and drinking enough.

If you feel as if you might faint, lie down and raise your legs in the air – this makes it less likely that you will faint. If it is not possible to lie down you should sit with your head between your knees.

Where can I get more information?

Visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/fainting

Useful emergency contacts

St Mary's Hospital's emergency department

South Wharf Road
London W2 1NY
Telephone 020 3312 6330

Charing Cross Hospital's emergency department

Fulham Palace Road
London W6 8RF
Telephone 020 3311 1005

Hammersmith Hospital's emergency department

Du Cane Road
London W12 0HS
Telephone 020 3313 4691

Eye emergencies (24-hour)

Western Eye Hospital
171 Marylebone Road
London NW1 5YE
Telephone 020 3312 3241

NHS 111

If you have an urgent medical problem and are not sure what to do, call 111 and speak to a fully trained adviser. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Alcohol liaison nurses

Charing Cross and Hammersmith hospitals: 020 3313 0244
St Mary's Hospital: 020 3312 7663

Drinkline

Free helpline: 0300 123 1110 (weekdays 09.00–20.00, weekends 11.00–16.00)

Sexual health clinic

Jefferiss wing
St Mary's Hospital
Praed Street
London W2 1NY
Telephone 020 3312 1697 (general enquiries)
020 3312 7583 (sexual health and HIV advice)

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at **imperial.pals@nhs.net** The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department
Fourth floor
Salton House
St Mary's Hospital
Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: **ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net**

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team: **imperial.communications@nhs.net**

Wi-fi

We have a free wi-fi service for basic filtered browsing and a premium wi-fi service (requiring payment) at each of our five hospitals. Look for WiFiSPARK_FREE or WiFiSPARK_PREMIUM