

Idaho Falls Pediatrics

Fainting (Syncope)

What is fainting?

Fainting (syncope) is defined as falling down and being unconscious for a short time (usually less than 1 minute). The four most common causes are sudden stress (for example, seeing a bad accident), severe pain, prolonged standing in one position with the knees locked, or sudden standing up (especially after bed rest). Children who have fainted from such causes recover quickly after lying down for a few minutes.

How can I take care of my child?

Have your child lie down for 10 to 15 minutes with his feet elevated. Put a cold washcloth on his forehead. Offer your child a glass of fruit juice after he is conscious. If the fainting was due to stress or fear, help your child talk about it. Smelling salts are unpleasant and not needed.

How can I help prevent fainting?

To prevent recurrent fainting, make sure your child drinks lots of water and gets enough salt in his diet every day.

To prevent fainting caused by standing too long, explain to your child that keeping the knees locked interferes with recirculation of the blood. If your child must stand for long periods of time, he should pump the blood by repeatedly relaxing and retightening the leg muscles.

To prevent fainting that occurs when your child stands up suddenly, make sure your child sits up and takes some deep breaths before standing up.

Also, feeling faint at any time or place is a warning to sit or lie down quickly.

When should I call Idaho Falls Pediatrics?

Call IMMEDIATELY if:

- Your child faints.

*NOTE: This information is provided as a public educational service. The information does not replace any of the instructions your physician gives you. If you have a medical emergency please call 911 or call the Hospital at (208) 529-6111. If you have questions about your child's care, please call Idaho Falls Pediatrics at (208) 522-4600.