

Postural tachycardia syndrome (POTS Syndrome)

Postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS) is a condition characterized by too little blood returning to the heart when moving from a lying down to a standing up position ([orthostatic intolerance](#)). Postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS) is characterized by [orthostatic intolerance](#)

Orthostatic Intolerance causes lightheadedness or fainting that can be eased by lying back down. In people with POTS, these symptoms are also accompanied by a rapid increase in heart rate.

People with POTS often have hypovolemia (low blood volume) and high levels of plasma norepinephrine while standing, reflecting increased sympathetic nervous system nervous activation and a rapid increase in heart rate.

Approximately half of affected people have a [small fiber neuropathy](#) that impacts their sudomotor nerves (those that activate the sweat glands). Some individuals develop a reddish-purple color in the legs when they stand, thought to be due to blood pooling or poor circulation. The color change subsides upon returning to a reclined position.

Other symptoms that have been reported in people with POTS include:

- Blurred vision
- Lightheadedness, dizziness or fainting
- Heart palpitations
- Headache
- Poor concentration
- Tiredness
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (for example, nausea, cramps, bloating, constipation, diarrhea)
- Shortness of breath
- Head, neck or chest discomfort
- Weakness
- Sleep disorders
- Difficulty exercising
- Anxiety
- Coldness or pain in the extremities

While the underlying causes of POTS are still being studied, a number of underlying conditions have been associated with POTS or with symptoms seen in POTS.

Although POTS can affect men and women of all ages, most cases are diagnosed in women between the ages of 15 and 50. The cause of POTS is unknown. However, episodes often begin after major surgery, trauma, or a viral illness. In women, episodes may also begin after pregnancy and the symptoms may worsen or the number of episodes may increase right before menstruation.

The goal of treatment is to increase blood flow and improve circulatory problems that may be causing POTS.

More information about these conditions can be viewed on [Dysautonomia International's website](#).