

What is POTS and how to deal with it

POTS stands for “Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome”. It's a condition where your body's automatic control of blood flow doesn't respond properly when you stand up. A simple way to think about it is this:

Your body has trouble adjusting to gravity. Normally, when you stand, gravity pulls blood toward your legs. Your nervous system quickly tightens your blood vessels and slightly increases your heart rate to keep enough blood flowing to your brain.

With POTS, that adjustment doesn't work well. Instead blood tends to pool in your lower body, your brain gets less blood than it needs for a short time.

Your heart races to compensate, sometimes increasing by 30 beats per minute or more within 10 minutes of standing (40 bpm or more in adolescents). This can make people feel dizzy or lightheaded, like they might faint, extremely tired, foggy-headed ("brain fog"), shaky or jittery, like their heart is pounding, short of breath or weak.

Many people notice they feel much better when they sit or lie down, because gravity is no longer pulling blood away from their brain.

POTS isn't caused by just one thing. It can develop after:

- Surgery or injury
- COVID-19 jabs
- Pregnancy
- A period of prolonged bed rest

POTS is usually not life-threatening, but it can be very disruptive. Some people have mild symptoms, while others find it difficult to work, exercise, or carry out everyday activities because of dizziness and fatigue.

Treatment depends on the person and many sufferers experiment to find what works best for them. The list includes:

- Drinking plenty of fluids
- Taking electrolytes (LMNT comes high up the list)
- Increasing salt intake
- Wearing compression garments to reduce blood pooling in the legs
- Starting with gentle, gradual exercise, especially exercises done sitting or lying down
- Medications can help regulate heart rate or improve blood pressure

POTS used to be a fairly rare problem but since the jabs started in 2021, cases have increased considerably.