

BLACKOUTS

It is important to learn about blackouts and a medical condition called syncope (**sin-co-pee**). This is so that we can understand what happens to some people, how we can make them feel better, and how we might be able to help.

What is a blackout?

'Blackout' is another word for 'faint'. When this happens to someone, they usually fall over, everything around them goes dark and they do not know what is going on around them. In other words, they become unconscious.

Why does this happen?

In some people, their heart slows down or stops and there is not enough pressure to pump blood around the body. When this happens, the amount of blood, which carries oxygen to the brain, slows down. This is what causes the blackout.

Do blackouts happen to lots of people?

Yes, blackouts happen to lots of people, of all ages, all over the world. Some people may only blackout once in their whole life, but others blackout many times every day! It is very important to go and see a doctor if you do ever blackout, because no faint is a simple faint!

What do I do if somebody around me has a blackout?

If you see somebody have a blackout or faint, there are a few things you can do to look after them. First of all, remember to stay calm and do not panic! It might be very scary to watch, but remember that they will be OK. Get a friend to go and find a teacher or grown up, while you stay with the person who has fainted. Put them in the recovery position by following the next three steps:

1. Put their arm nearest to you at a right angle to their body with their palm facing upwards.
2. Put their other arm across their chest and make sure their cheek is resting on the back of their hand.
3. Bend their leg at the knee to stop them rolling over too far.

Remember to make sure that they have a clear airway and can breathe properly.

Make sure there are no dangerous objects around them, so that they will not hurt themselves. Stay very calm and quiet, and wait for the grown up to take over.

