

Every patient who faints for an unknown reason should contact their doctor and be given a 12-lead EKG (heart rhythm check) which must be reviewed by the doctor.

## Syncope (fainting) is a symptom not a condition

If someone loses consciousness for a few seconds or even minutes, they are often said to have had a blackout.

Up to 50% of the population will faint at least once in their lifetime, and most are unaware that fainting could be a warning sign for a potentially serious and life-threatening heart condition.

Accurate and timely diagnosis following an unexplained loss of consciousness is vital to identify potentially fatal underlying conditions and to prevent a dramatic reduction in a patient's quality of life. Many people who suffer sudden cardiac death have no symptoms other than a history of fainting.



### Epilepsy

An electrical 'short-circuiting' in the brain. Epileptic attacks are usually referred to as seizures. Diagnosis is made by a neurologist.



### Psychogenic blackouts

Triggered by stress and anxiety, often occurring in young adults struggling with extreme pressure at school or work. In exceptional cases it can be a result of ill treatment or abuse in childhood.



## Want to know more?

For further information and resources

Call: **843 415 1886**


Email: **info@stars-us.org**

or visit: **www.stars-us.org**



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**UNEXPLAINED**  
**loss of**  
**consciousness**

### Syncope Discussion Guide

Take fainting  to heart

*There is no such thing as a simple faint.*

**[www.stars-us.org](https://www.stars-us.org)**

# There is no such thing as a simple faint

there is *always* an explanation



## Three major reasons for a blackout:



### Syncope

A sudden lack of blood supply to the brain due to a problem with the heart or regulation of blood pressure.

## Did you know...

An estimated

# 50%

of the population will **faint at least once** in their lifetime.



Approximately

# 1-2%

of visits to the Emergency Department are **due to syncope**.

In some cases, often the person may have regained consciousness and have no memory of fainting or recall the cause before a healthcare professional has an opportunity to assess them, making it often difficult to capture the cause.



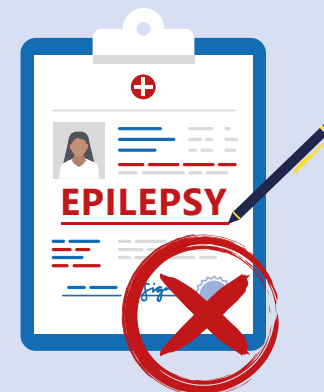
## Syncope causes falls

Greater awareness of syncope as a cause of falls, particularly in the elderly, is key to effective treatment and prevention of recurring falls. It is not always a trip or slip that is the culprit.

Patients' symptoms are frequently ignored or dismissed as trivial. The impact of this on patients is significant, yet commonly underestimated. Some causes may not be serious whilst others could be fatal.



39% of children and 20-30% of adults with epilepsy are **wrongly diagnosed**.



They are not epileptic – they frequently have an underlying arrhythmia (heart rhythm disorder).

Up to

# 6% of admissions to hospital

are **due to syncope**.



## Questions to discuss with your doctor

- Whether they have considered epilepsy and syncope
- Ask for a referral to a paediatric cardiologist for a child or to an electrophysiologist/cardiologist (heart rhythm expert)
- Am I allowed to continue driving, whilst waiting to see a consultant?