



## HOW TO FIND US

The hospital is accessible by car or public transport.  
For comprehensive information on how to find us  
visit our website at [www.sah.org.au/how-to-find-us](http://www.sah.org.au/how-to-find-us)

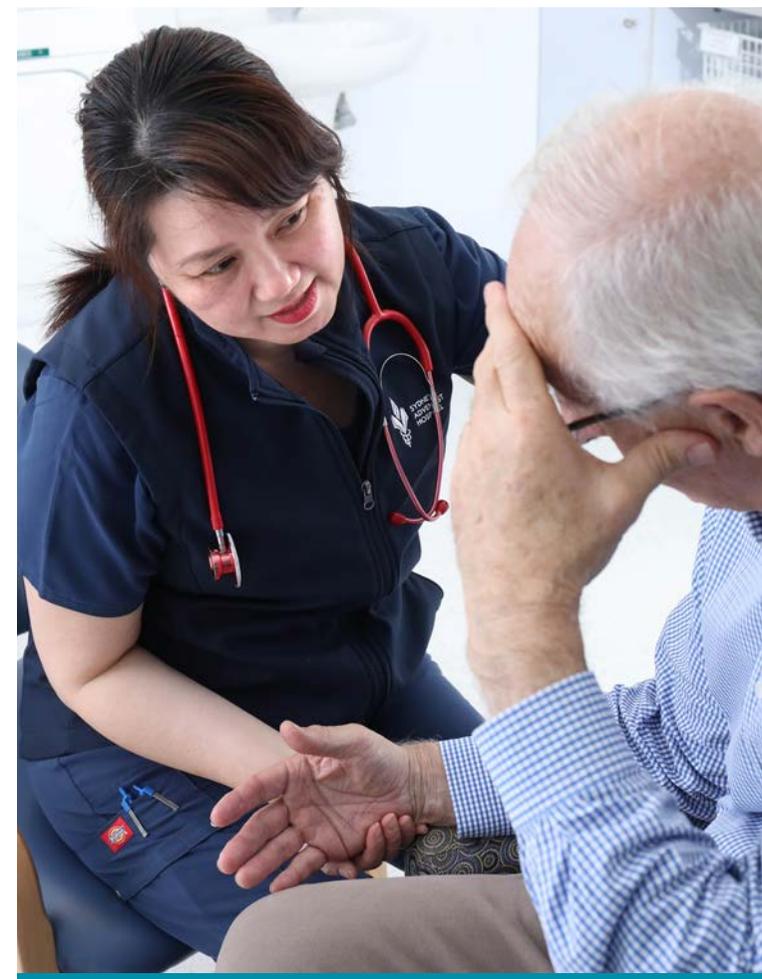
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**San Heart – Blackouts & Faints Clinic**  
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 185 Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga 2076



# Syncope – Blackouts & Faints



*Trust us to help you find the answers you've been looking for...*

A teaching hospital of  THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY  
 Partner in nursing education  Avondale COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
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 SYDNEY  
ADVENTIST  
HOSPITAL

 **San HEART**  
BLACKOUTS & FAINTS CLINIC

# Blackouts & Faints

Having an unexplained blackout or faint can be extremely worrying and trying to accurately diagnose the cause can prove difficult.

For many people it can mean multiple trips to various specialists without getting a diagnosis. **In fact, published international data suggests that on average patients see 3 different specialists and have 13 tests performed with one quarter of these having 20+ tests.**<sup>1</sup> This can not only be frustrating and expensive, but concerning when you don't know what the underlying reason is for your blackouts or fainting.

Sydney Adventist Hospital's **Blackouts & Faints Clinic** addresses these concerns by offering rapid assessment, appropriate, evidence based testing and a management plan. Inconclusive patient results will be reviewed by a multidisciplinary team of experts within 2 days of their clinic visit significantly reducing the time you spend looking for answers.

## WHY AM I FAINTING OR HAVING A BLACKOUT?

Fainting is a sudden loss of consciousness that occurs when blood supply (that carries oxygen) to the brain is reduced. This loss of consciousness is sometimes called 'passing out' or 'blacking out'. Your healthcare provider may use the medical term syncope (pronounced sin-koe-pee) when referring to your fainting. Most often, a fainting episode is brief and consciousness is regained in a few minutes, although there may be a period of confusion.

**Fainting is a common problem. Almost 90,000 Australians presented at Emergency Departments (ED) for syncope in 2017-2018.**<sup>2</sup>

## CAUSES OF BLACKOUTS AND FAINTING

Blackouts and fainting can be caused by many things. Many people have a medical condition they may or may not know about that affects the nervous system or heart. You may also have a condition that affects blood flow through your body and causes your blood pressure to drop when you change positions (eg standing after lying down).



## THE RISKS OF UNEXPLAINED BLACKOUTS AND FAINTING

Some causes of blackouts and fainting are benign but other causes can be serious. Cardiac conditions, such as abnormal heartbeats, are among the most serious causes. **Blackouts and fainting could be a warning sign of a potentially serious heart condition.**

## THE RISKS OF UNEXPLAINED FALLS

Severe injuries can result from unexplained falls related to fainting or 'blacking out'. Often hospital admission is required for the result of one of these episodes. Sometimes recovering from fall injuries can become the focus, masking the actual cause and the potential of serious underlying issues. Living without a diagnosis can compromise quality of life and lead to anxiety, depression, restricted driving or an alteration of daily activities. There are many reasons why people faint. However, determining the cause is what's important.

**In Australia, syncope is the 15th most common cause of Emergency Department (ED) presentation and 5th most common cause of hospitalisation from ED.**<sup>2</sup>

### References:

1. Edvardsson N, et al. Europace.2011;13:262-269
2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018. Emergency department care 2017-18: Australian hospital statistics. Health services series no. 89. Cat. no. HSE 216. Canberra: AIHW.

# Blackouts & Faints Clinic

Sydney Adventist Hospital – fondly known as the San, has been a leading provider of private care since 1903. It was the first private hospital in Australia to offer extensive cardiac services including open heart surgery over 40 years ago. It was a pioneer then and still remains focused on leading the way now.

## ONE PLACE FOR COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

Sydney Adventist Hospital's Blackouts & Faints Clinic will provide one destination where you can be confident that our trusted experts will explore all of your concerns.

## WHEN YOU VISIT OUR CLINIC YOU CAN EXPECT:

1. **Verbal assessment:** this will include a thorough exploration of medical history and any pre-existing conditions
2. **Physical assessment:** this will include checking blood pressure, taking blood tests and performing an ECG to monitor your heart's electrical activity
3. **Doctor review:** a trained syncope doctor will review the test results and request any further tests if needed
4. **Suspected diagnosis and treatment:** based on the results the doctor will discuss the suspected diagnosis and outline an appropriate treatment pathway
5. **Referral and/or discharge information:** the doctor will either provide a referral to the appropriate specialist if needed (eg cardiologist, neurologist etc), referral to the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) or if no further investigation is needed, the doctor will provide educational discharge information

## REFERRALS, BOOKINGS AND ENQUIRIES

For patients visiting the clinic, it is suggested you allow at least 2 hours from arrival to departure for the assessments, tests and doctor review. **A GP referral is required and an appointment must be made prior to arrival.**

It is recommended that you bring someone with you who has witnessed your fainting episodes if possible.

### **The clinic appointment is bulk-billed.**

*Please note: Only the clinic appointment and associated tests are bulk-billed and any further specialist treatment or an inpatient stay will be subject to the patient's own level of private health fund cover.*