

Syncope (Blackouts and Faints) Clinic

One place for comprehensive assessment

Sydney Adventist Hospital's Syncope (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. In most cases an ultrasound of your heart will also be conducted to assess the structure and function of your heart, and in some cases a Tilt Table test will be conducted to assess your blood pressure response when standing.
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), or if no further investigation is needed, the doctor will provide educational discharge information. Some patients will be followed up in the Syncope (Blackouts & Faints) clinic.

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.

Payments

Clinical appointments and Tilt Table Tests will incur a gap payment.

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

Contact us

Monday – Friday, 8am – 4pm

Phone: (02) 9480 9633 Fax: (02) 9480 8233

Email: heartclinicenquiries@sah.org.au

Website: www.sah.org.au/blackouts-and-faints

San Heart – Syncope (Blackouts & Faints) Clinic

Level 5 Kress Cardiac Ward

(enter via lifts in Clifford Building)

Sydney Adventist Hospital

185 Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga NSW 2076



A teaching hospital of



Australian National University

Partner in nursing education



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Syncope – Blackouts & Faints



BLACKOUTS & FAINTS

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.

Having an unexplained blackouts 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 receiving a diagnosis. In fact, published international data suggests that on average patients see three different specialists and have 13 tests performed with one quarter of patients having 20+ tests.¹ This can not only be frustrating and expensive, but concerning when you do not know what the underlying reason is for your blackouts or fainting.

Sydney Adventist Hospital's Syncope (Blackouts & Faints) clinic addresses these concerns by offering rapid assessment, appropriate evidenced- based testing; and a management plan.

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. Generally a fainting episode is brief and consciousness is regained in a minute or so, although there may be a period of confusion.



The most recent data shows that more than 90,000 Australians presented at Emergency Departments for syncope (2022-2023).²

Risks of unexplained 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).

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

Risks of unexplained falls

Severe injuries can result from unexplained falls related to fainting or 'blacking out'. Often hospital admission is required as a 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 in daily activities. There are many reasons why people faint. However, determining the cause is what is important.



References:

1. Edvardsson N, et al. Europace.2011;13:262-269
2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2023. Emergency department care 2022-23: MyHospitals Platform. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/myhospitals>. Canberra: AIHW.



In Australia, syncope is the 19th most common cause of Emergency Department (ED) presentation and 6th most common cause of hospitalisation from ED.²