

# Needle Related Fainting:

*Why does it happen? What to do about it?*

## Why does someone faint?

*Fainting is caused by a sudden drop in blood pressure.*

This occurs when the brain (your control center) does not receive enough fuel (oxygen), and you lose control and awareness for a short period of time. This drop in blood pressure is called the **vasovagal response**.

### Vasovagal syncope:

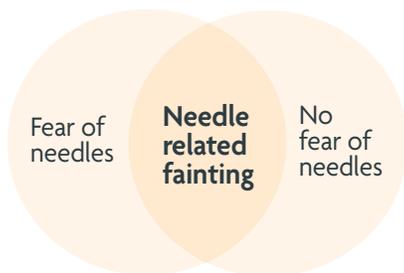
an overreaction to a trigger (like a needle or blood).

It is one of the most common causes of fainting.

### Warning signs



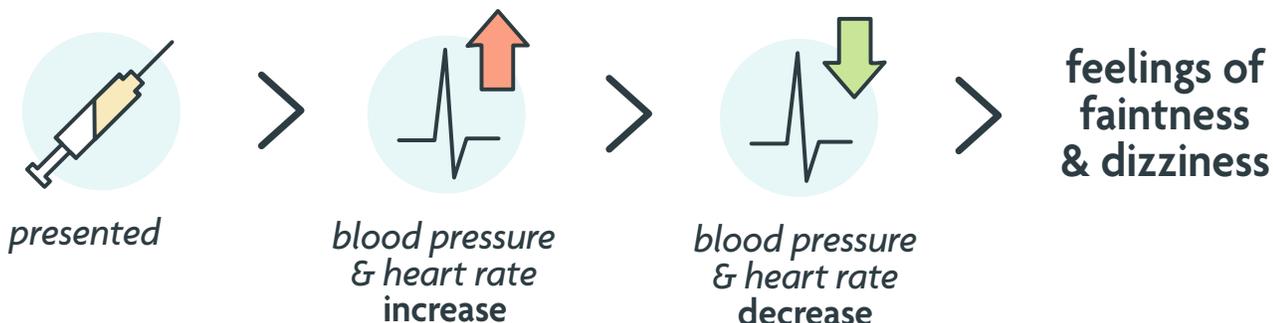
## Does fainting mean someone is afraid of needles?



*Fainting is more common in those with needle fear.*

But, not everyone who faints due to needles is afraid of them. And, not everyone who is afraid of needles will faint.

## What happens when someone gets a needle?



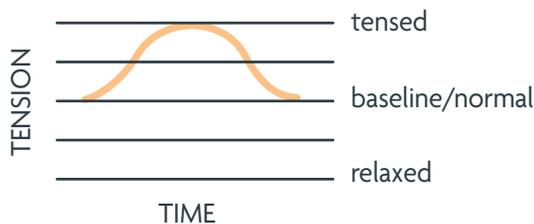
# Muscle tension:

*A way to help stop fainting during needles.*

**Muscle tension:** *alternating between tensing and releasing muscle(s) in the body (e.g., legs, stomach).*

Muscle tension increases someone's blood pressure prior to and during the needle. When the needle is presented, their blood pressure does not drop to a low level, **preventing fainting**.

**Important:** The person should not fully relax their muscles after tensing but instead just go back to "normal" or baseline.



## Helpful Tip:

Laying down while getting a needle may also help prevent fainting.

## Remember!

A person should not clench or tense the arm where the needle will go.

## Who can use this technique?

Muscle tension is **a safe technique that children 7 and older and adults can use**. Muscle tension can help anyone who gets dizzy and faints during needles.

Ask the person to follow these steps:

1. Sit in a chair.
2. Tense or squeeze the muscles in their legs and stomach.
3. Squeeze for about 10-15 seconds until their face feels flushed or warm.
4. Release the tension for 20-30 seconds.
5. Repeat steps 2, 3, and 4 until the needle is over, or until the feeling of faintness passes.