



If you have ADHD or autism and struggle with dizziness, brain fog, or extreme fatigue when standing up, you may have Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS). Many neurodivergent individuals experience POTS, but it's often misunderstood or dismissed. This guide will help you understand the condition, how it affects daily life, and what you can do about it.



## HOW POTS AFFECTS DAILY LIFE

POTS is a disorder that affects how your body regulates blood flow. When you stand up, gravity pulls your blood downward. Normally, your blood vessels tighten and your heart adjusts to keep blood flowing to your brain. In POTS, this process doesn't work correctly. Instead, your heart beats too fast, causing dizziness, fatigue, and even fainting.

Common symptoms include:

- Dizziness or feeling lightheaded when standing
- Brain fog (difficulty concentrating or remembering things)
- Rapid heart rate (tachycardia)
- Fatigue that doesn't go away with rest
- Temperature regulation issues (feeling too hot or too cold)
- Digestive problems like nausea or bloating



## WHY STIMULANTS MAY HELP RATHER THAN HARM



Many doctors hesitate to prescribe stimulant medications (like Adderall or Ritalin) to people with POTS because they increase heart rate. However, research and patient experiences show that stimulants can actually help POTS symptoms in neurodivergent individuals by improving blood vessel function & tone and reducing brain fog.

Stimulants work by increasing norepinephrine, a chemical in the brain that also helps regulate blood pressure and circulation. This means that in some cases, stimulants can make it easier for your body to pump blood efficiently, reducing dizziness and fatigue.

If you have POTS and ADHD, a knowledgeable doctor can help determine if stimulants are safe and beneficial for you.



## MANAGING SYMPTOMS AND ADVOCATING FOR TREATMENT

Managing POTS involves a combination of medical treatments and lifestyle adjustments. Here's what can help:

- Increase hydration: Drinking more water (and electrolytes) helps maintain blood volume.
- Increase salt intake: More salt helps your body retain fluids, improving circulation.
- Wear compression garments: Compression socks or leggings can help prevent blood from pooling in your legs.
- Practice recumbent exercises: Exercises like swimming or recumbent biking keep you active without worsening symptoms.
- Advocate for testing: Ask your doctor about a "tilt table test" or active stand test to diagnose POTS properly.



### Hypermobile Ehlers–Danlos Syndrome (hEDS) & Neurodivergence

Hypermobile Ehlers–Danlos Syndrome (hEDS) is a connective tissue disorder that makes joints extra flexible, causing pain, fatigue, and frequent injuries. Many autistic and ADHD individuals have hEDS, yet doctors often overlook this connection. If you've always been extra flexible, bruise easily, or experience chronic pain, hEDS might be a factor in your health.



### HOW HEDS PRESENTS IN AUTISTIC AND ADHD INDIVIDUALS



Neurodivergent individuals with hEDS often experience:

- Frequent joint dislocations or sprains (even from small movements)
- Chronic pain in joints and muscles
- Fatigue that doesn't improve with rest
- Poor proprioception (knowing where your body is in space), leading to frequent clumsiness
- Gastrointestinal issues like IBS or slow digestion

This overlap suggests that connective tissue differences might play a role in neurodivergence, but more research is needed.



### IMPACT ON MOBILITY, PAIN, AND FATIGUE

hEDS affects movement and energy levels in many ways:

- Pain: Loose joints can lead to strain, making everyday movements painful.
- Fatigue: Your body has to work harder to stabilize weak joints, causing exhaustion.

Mobility Challenges: Some people need braces, canes, or wheelchairs for support.





## STRATEGIES FOR SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT



Managing hEDS requires a combination of physical support and daily habits:

- **Physical therapy (PT):** A PT who understands hypermobility can help strengthen muscles safely.
- **Occupational therapy (OT):** Helps with daily tasks by teaching ergonomic techniques.
- **Pelvic floor therapy:** Can help if hypermobility affects bladder or bowel function.
- **Braces & mobility aids:** Knee braces, wrist supports, or even orthotics can help stabilize joints.

**Pacing activities:** Learning to rest before exhaustion sets in can reduce pain and fatigue.



## Treatment & Management Options



### MEDICATIONS

- **Stimulants (for ADHD and POTS):** Help with focus and circulation.
- **Beta-blockers:** Reduce heart rate in POTS patients.
- **Antihistamines & Mast Cell Stabilizers:** Help manage MCAS symptoms (often found in hEDS patients).
- **Pain management options:** Includes NSAIDs, low-dose antidepressants, and nerve pain medications.

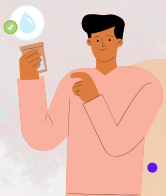


### THERAPIES

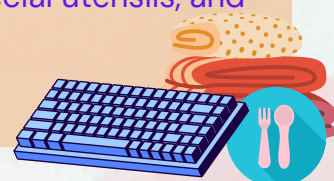
- **Physical therapy (PT):** Helps strengthen muscles to support unstable joints.
- **Occupational therapy (OT):** Teaches strategies for daily tasks and pain management.
- **Pelvic floor therapy:** Helps address bladder and bowel dysfunction related to hypermobility.



## LIFESTYLE ADJUSTMENTS



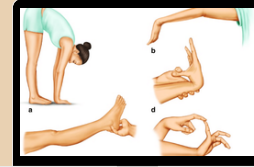
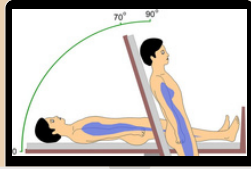
- **Hydration:** Drinking more fluids supports circulation.
- **Salt intake:** Helps retain fluids and maintain blood pressure.
- **Compression garments:** Support blood flow and joint stability.
- **Adaptive tools:** Ergonomic keyboards, special utensils, and weighted blankets can help.



## Resources for Patients & Providers

### HOW TO GET DIAGNOSED

- **Ehlers-Danlos Society Diagnostic Criteria:** The Beighton Score is a tool used to measure joint hypermobility. If you score high on this test, it may indicate hEDS.



- **Tilt Table Test:** A diagnostic test for POTS that measures heart rate and blood pressure changes when moving from lying to standing.

- **Specialist Directories:** Finding a doctor who understands hEDS, POTS, and neurodivergence can be difficult, but there are directories available online that list specialists.



### SUPPORT GROUPS & ONLINE COMMUNITIES

- **Ehlers-Danlos Society ([www.ehlers-danlos.com](http://www.ehlers-danlos.com))** – Offers information and support networks.
- **POTS & Dysautonomia Support Groups on Facebook** – Connects people dealing with similar challenges.
- **r/ehlersdanlos & r/POTS on Reddit** – Peer support and shared experiences.
- **Local support groups & disability organizations** – May offer in-person meetings or resources.



### FINAL THOUGHTS

If you're neurodivergent and have been struggling with unexplained symptoms like dizziness, chronic pain, or extreme fatigue, it's important to know that you're not alone—and you're not imagining it. The connection between neurodivergence, POTS, and hEDS is real, even if many doctors aren't familiar with it yet. Understanding your body and advocating for the right care can make all the difference in improving your quality of life.

If this guide resonates with you, consider seeking an evaluation for POTS or hEDS and connecting with support communities that understand your experiences.