



## ***PATIENT INFORMATION***

# Torbay Hospital Syncope Service Tilt Testing

### **What is a Tilt Test?**

This is a safe test where your blood pressure and heart rhythm are monitored while lying and standing. You will be asked to lie on a special bed called a Tilt Table which can be adjusted to move slowly until you are almost in the upright (standing) position. The bed also has a footplate at the bottom to rest your feet on. You will be supported with 2 safety belts, one for your chest and one across your knees. This test is performed by a doctor who will remain with you throughout the test.

### **Why do I need a Tilt Test?**

You may have been experiencing symptoms such as loss of consciousness (fainting / blackouts), dizziness or feeling light-headed, which may be due to a drop in blood pressure or sometimes slowing of the heart rate. Tilt Testing is used to investigate why this is happening.

### **What a Tilt Test involves and the length of time it takes?**

Electrodes (stickers) and leads will be placed on your chest and a small cuff placed around your fingers to measure your heart rate and blood pressure.

It is important that you are relaxed and quiet throughout the test as talking can disturb the information being recorded.

The room will be darkened but a low light will remain on throughout the test. You may be given medication that is administered under the tongue as a mouth spray (glycerine trinitrate) but your doctor will discuss this with you when you arrive for the test.

The length of time the test takes depends on when, or if, you experience a change in blood pressure or heart rate. For some people this takes a few minutes, and for others, they may complete the test without any symptoms, this is a negative test.

The maximum time of testing would be 50 minutes. However, you will need to allow approximately 1 and 1/2 hours in the department, so that a full history of your events can be collected by the doctor and to allow recovery after the test.

If you are 60 years or older then we may perform a short test called Carotid Sinus Massage (CSM) prior to the tilt test. A gentle massage for 10 seconds will be performed over the large blood vessel on each side of your neck, whilst lying flat, and then again in standing position on the tilt bed. A doctor will perform this test.

### **Are there any risks involved?**

Head-Up Tilt Testing is a safe procedure and the rate of complications is very low. The presence of a prolonged slowing or pause of the heart rate cannot be considered a complication, since this is the end point of the test.

Rapid return to the lying position at this point is usually all that is needed. Raising the legs immediately is advised for a rapid recovery.

No complications have been published with the use of nitro-glycerine spray. Minor side effects, such as a short-lived headache is common. Less than 1% of people require longer time to recover after the test.

Carotid Sinus Massage: It is estimated that complications of CSM occurs in 1:3000 individuals. These complications are usually short-lived neurological deficits. This is minimised by taking a history and listening to the blood flow in the blood vessels on the neck before performing the test.

(European Society of Cardiology 2004)

### **Important things you need to do**

- ❖ You must not eat or drink for 4 hours before the test.
- ❖ You must continue all medications (taken with minimal fluids) unless otherwise advised by your doctor.
- ❖ Bring with you a list of your medications you are taking.
- ❖ Wear comfortable clothing and footwear.
- ❖ We recommend that you bring with you a friend / relative to accompany you home after the test.
- ❖ If you have ever lost control of your bladder after a faint / blackout, then please bring a change of clothing with you, although this is often not needed.

Contact numbers:

**☎ If you have any questions with regards to your appointment please contact  
Mrs Jean Davis 01803 655323**

**If you are unable to make your appointment then please phone in advance so we can reschedule your appointment.**