

PATIENT INFORMATION

Attending the Balance Clinic

You have been referred to the balance clinic for assessment and testing.

This leaflet gives information about what to expect and how to prepare for the appointment. The appointment can take up to 2 hours.

As some of the tests that we undertake are likely to make you feel dizzy, we ask that you have a friend or relative bring you and drive you back from the clinic. If you would like them to be with you for the consultation with the doctor they are welcome to stay.

If you are taking any of the following medicines for your dizziness we ask that you stop these 48 hours prior to the appointment as they can affect the test results:

- Stemetil (Prochlorperazine, Buccastem)
- Serc (Betahistine)
- Stugeron (Cinnarizine)

Please do **NOT** stop any other medication.

Please do **NOT** drink any alcohol in the 24 hours prior to your appointment. Please do **NOT** wear eye makeup to the appointment.

When you arrive in the department you will be asked to fill in a questionnaire about your symptoms. You will then be seen by a doctor who will discuss the problems you have been experiencing with balance/dizziness and enquire about associated symptoms. You will then be examined and offered tests of your balance.

An Audiologist will carry out balance tests which are designed to give information about the balance system within the inner ear and the brain. As the brain uses information from the eyes for balance the tests involve recording of eye movements.

VNG (Video nystagmography)

This test will take around 20 minutes and is carried out with you seated in a chair in front of a light bar. You will be asked to wear a pair of snugly fitting goggles; these are fitted with cameras that allow us to monitor your eye movements on a computer screen. You will be asked to watch a dot of light on the bar in front of you as it moves in different ways whilst the Audiologist records your eye movements. This test gives us information about the balance system within the inner ear and the brain.


Caloric Test

This test will take around 30 minutes and gives us information about how well the inner ear is working and whether there is any difference between the two ears. For this test you will be lying on a couch with the goggles on. Each ear is stimulated in turn by running water into the outer part of the ear for 30 seconds. First we use warm water (7 degrees above body temperature) in each ear and then cool. (7 degrees below body temperature). After each of the four irrigations you are likely to feel dizzy (this is a normal response) and we will make recordings of your eye movements in the dark for about 3 minutes. The dizziness normally subsides once each recording is over.

When all the tests are completed the results will be explained to you by the doctor any questions you have will be answered and a management plan discussed.

Please let us know before your appointment if you need an interpreter or any special assistance.

If you have any questions about your appointment you can contact the Audiology Department by phone or email:

Telephone:  **(01803) 656325**
Email: audiology.sdhct@nhs.net

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.