



Department of Audiology and Hearing Therapy

What to Expect at a Balance Assessment Appointment

What will happen at my appointment?

When you go to the hospital you will be seen by a clinical scientist, who may be accompanied by a student. Your appointment will last up to 90 minutes.

We will ask you some questions about your balance problem to try and get a better idea of what has been happening.

We will examine your ears and perform a quick test of your eardrums and middle ears. This involves putting a soft ear tip into your ear canal for a few seconds. You may hear a sound and feel a slight pressure change. We may then undertake a positional test, which is looking for a very common type of dizziness. This test will involve you lying back on a couch, which we will demonstrate to you. Video goggles will be used to record your eye movements when following a target. Your brain moves your eyes in response to messages from your balance system, so by measuring the movement of your eyes, we can see how well your eyes, brain and balance system are interacting.

The last test that we may do is called the caloric test. This involves putting a small amount of water into each of your ears to stimulate your balance organs. We can then tell how well the two sides are working together. This test may make you feel slightly dizzy, but this will only last for a very short time.

What will happen next?

The clinical scientist will write a report which will be passed on to your ENT doctor or consultant. If you do not already have an ENT appointment arranged, you will receive an appointment to discuss the results of the tests.

What can I do to prepare for the appointment?

- Please ensure that your ears are clear of wax for the appointment. If you are concerned that you may have a build-up of wax in your ears, please seek advice from your GP practice or local pharmacy. Do not use your fingers or any objects like cotton buds to remove earwax. This will push it in and make it worse.
- 48 hours prior to the appointment you need to stop taking your usual balance (or vertigo) medication, and any antihistamines as these medicines can influence the results of the tests. Examples of these medications include: betahistine (Serc®), cinnarizine (Stugeron®), cyclizine or prochlorperazine (Stemetil®)

- If you are stopping your usual balance medication, it is recommended that you **do not drive** to and from your appointment
- Please refrain from drinking alcohol for 48 hours prior to your appointment, as this can influence testing
- Please do not wear any eye makeup to your appointment, as this affects the quality of the recordings we make of your eye movements
- If you have contact lenses, please wear these in preference to glasses
- We would be most grateful if you could complete the enclosed questionnaire and bring this with you to your appointment.

Should I bring somebody with me?

It is advisable to bring a friend or relative to drive you home as there is a slight chance that you may feel unsteady following testing.

Contact Numbers:

We hope that you have found this information useful. If you have any questions or are worried about anything, please contact the Audiology Department:

Telephone: 01305 255563

Email: Audiology@dchft.nhs.uk

About this leaflet:

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If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email pals@dchft.nhs.uk



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