

Patient information factsheet

Autonomic function test

This leaflet provides information about your forthcoming appointment so that you know exactly what to expect. We'll go into more detail during your appointment and you'll also be able to ask any questions that you may have.

Having an autonomic function test

An autonomic function test is designed to look at how your body responds to certain situations. You may be referred for this test if you have had episodes of fainting, collapse or passing out with an unknown cause. It aims to induce your symptoms in a controlled and safe environment where you can be monitored. The results will hopefully explain why you might be having these episodes.

Preparing for your appointment

You must not eat or drink anything (including water) for four hours prior to this test.

At the appointment

At the beginning of the test you will be asked to remove your clothes from the waist up and put on a hospital gown. Stickers (called electrodes) will be attached to your chest. Some men may need to have a small area of their chest shaved in order for the electrodes to stick to the skin. A blood pressure cuff will be attached to your hand and your upper arm. This equipment will be used to monitor your heart rate, rhythm and blood pressure throughout the test.

You will be asked to do three different exercises:

- Some deep breathing exercises.
- We'll ask you to lie flat on a couch and then you will be instructed to stand-up quickly.
- You will also be asked to perform a valsalva manoeuvre, which is the sensation you get when you try to pop your ears or blow hard into a tube.

You can expect the test to take about an hour. At the end of the test the monitoring equipment will be removed. You may like to bring some food and drink with you for after your appointment, as you will not have had anything to eat or drink for almost five hours.

Your results

The doctor may be able to discuss the results with you on the day of your appointment. Alternatively your results will be sent back to the doctor who requested the test, which may be your GP or hospital consultant. If this is a hospital consultant you may be given the results of this test during your next clinic appointment. If you are unsure please ask during your appointment.

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Further information

If you need help getting to your appointment please contact your GP surgery so they can arrange hospital transportation for you.

If you would like further information please contact the non-invasive cardiology department on **023 8120 6404**. Alternatively you can visit our website at **www.uhs.nhs.uk** and search for '**non-invasive cardiology**'.

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8120 4688 for help.