

Patient information factsheet

Tilt table 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 a tilt table test

A tilt table test is designed to look at how your body responds to standing upright for a long period of time. 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. You will then be asked to lie down on a couch, which is the tilt table. 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 also be attached to your hand and upper arm. This equipment will be used to continuously monitor your heart rate, rhythm and blood pressure throughout the test.

You will be secured to the tilt table using fabric straps for your safety. The table will tilt you upwards until you are practically standing upright, i.e. you will be tilted head-up. You will stay in this position for up to 45 minutes whilst the technicians in the room turn the lights down and sit quietly behind you. You will be monitored throughout the test to see if there are any changes in your heart rate, rhythm or blood pressure. You will be able to talk to the technicians in the room at any point during the test, for example if you start to feel unwell.

You might be given a medication called glyceryl trinitrate (GTN) at some point during the test, which helps us assess what might be causing your symptoms. It is administered as a spray under the tongue. If you need this medication we will discuss it with you at the beginning of the test. The medication can cause a headache, but this doesn't usually last for long.

If you do pass out during the test, the tilt table will immediately be brought back down to the flat position. We'll raise your feet slightly so that they are higher than your head to enable you to recover quickly. At the end of the test the technicians will inform you that the test is over. They will carefully bring the table back to the starting position, so that you are lying flat again. You will then be unstrapped from the table and disconnected from the monitoring devices.

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.

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Your results

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

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'.

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