

Having tests at the Balance Centre

Leicester Balance Centre

Information for Patients

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Introduction

Please read this leaflet carefully before attending your appointment at Leicester Balance Centre, as there are instructions to follow to prepare for your appointment. It will also answer some of the questions you may have about your appointment.

Leicester Balance Centre is based in the Hearing Services Department. This is located near to Gate 2 of hospital entrance, Leicester Royal Infirmary, Leicester LE1 5WW.

Why have I been sent an appointment for balance tests?

You have been referred to Leicester Balance Centre by a consultant (for example, Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) consultant) because you may be having periods of dizziness or unsteadiness.

What will happen during the appointment?

A number of balance tests will be carried out. Each test will be explained to you in detail by the clinician who sees you. If you are worried about the tests, the clinician will answer any questions you may have at your appointment. You will find a list of the balance tests we do in this leaflet, along with a short description.

How long will my appointment last?

Sometimes the appointment can take more than 2 hours. Please allow for this when making travel arrangements such as parking costs or arranging transport.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

Before your appointment

Please make sure you follow the advice below before your appointment. If you do not, we may not be able to do your tests on the day and your appointment will have to be moved to another day:

2 weeks before your appointment:

Make sure that your GP or nurse has checked that your ears are clear of wax.

2 days before your appointment:

Do not take any of the following:

- Caffeine (this includes tea, coffee, chocolate and cola)
- Alcohol
- Medication prescribed **only** for your balance / dizziness (this includes Stemetil, prochlorperazine, Buccastem, Serc, cinnarizine, betahistine and Stugeron).

You should stop taking balance medicines 2 days before your appointment because they may affect your assessment. Most patients can stop these medicines safely. Please check with your GP if you need more advice about stopping your balance medication.

On the day of your appointment

- Do not wear any eye make-up as this will affect the eye recording system.
- Wear socks.
- We may need access to your lower neck (clavicle). Please wear clothing that allows access to this area, such as a T-shirt.
- You may bring someone with you to your appointment for help or support.
- Please bring the following items along with you to your appointment:
 - Your completed questionnaire (called a vestibular rehabilitation benefit questionnaire (VRBQ)) if this was posted to you with your appointment letter.
 - A list of current medications (including any herbal or over-the-counter medicines) which you regularly take.
 - Any recent consultation reports.

Please arrive on time for your appointment and allow time for parking. Arriving late may mean we have to move your appointment to a different day.

After your appointment

You may not be fit to drive right away after your tests. We advise that you arrange for someone to bring you and collect you from your appointment. If you want to drive to the appointment, make sure that someone can collect you and your vehicle if you do not feel fit to drive after your appointment.

Which tests will I need to have?

Certain types of balance problems and dizziness can start from your inner ear or nerve structures attached to your ear known as the “vestibular system”. Each test carried out looks at the vestibular system in a different way.

A description of the tests we do are given below. If you would like to know which test(s) you are having, please contact the department.

We will ask for verbal consent for each test before starting.

This is a guide of what to expect.

- **Videonystagmography (VNG)**

For this test you will be asked to wear a pair of goggles. These contain cameras.

You will sit in front of a screen.

A light will be displayed on the screen. The cameras will record your eye movements.

We will ask you to do a number of tasks such as following the light or turning the position of your head.

We may also put a cover on the goggles to record your eye movement in darkness.



- **Caloric test**

This test allows us to measure your left and right vestibular system separately.

You will lie down on a couch.

You will wear the goggles which have cameras in them to let us record your eye movements.

We will then pass some warm air into your ear with a special machine. This can give a sensation of turning lasting a few minutes. This is typically mild and well tolerated. Sometimes we will also do the test with cool air, but we will allow time between each change of air.

Your eye movements are recorded throughout this process.

- **Video head impulse test (vHIT)**

For this test you will be asked to wear a tight fitting pair of goggles which has a camera attached.

We will then move your head in small sudden movements. You will be asked to keep your eyes focused on a target during the test. It is important not to resist the head movements and keep your neck loose.

From this we can check your eye movement in relation to head movements.

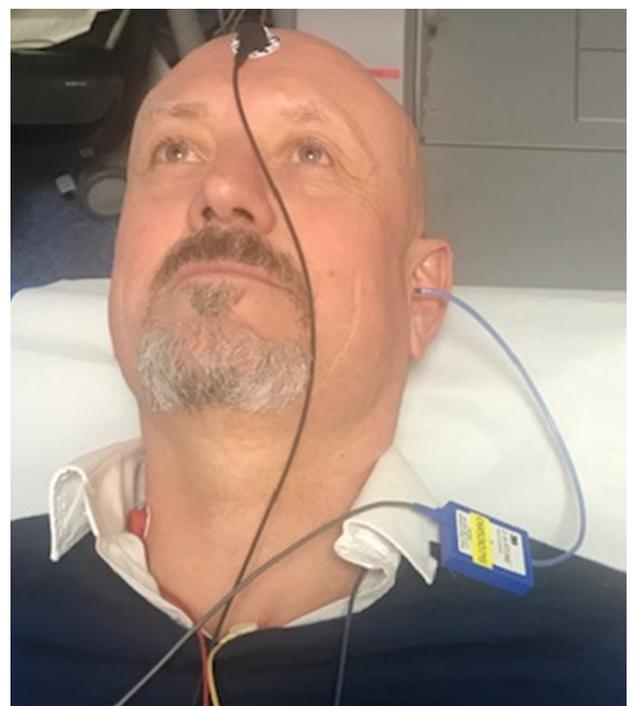


- **Vestibular evoked myogenic potential (VEMP) test**

For this test you will have electrodes put onto certain areas of your face and neck. We will gently wipe areas of your skin where the electrodes need to be placed.

Once the electrodes are in place, a small headphone is placed into your ear. Small bursts of sound will be played through this to stimulate the vestibular system.

We can only record a response when the neck or eye muscles are contracted so you will be asked to lift your head from the couch or look to the ceiling while we measure this.



- **Computerised dynamic posturography (CDP) test**

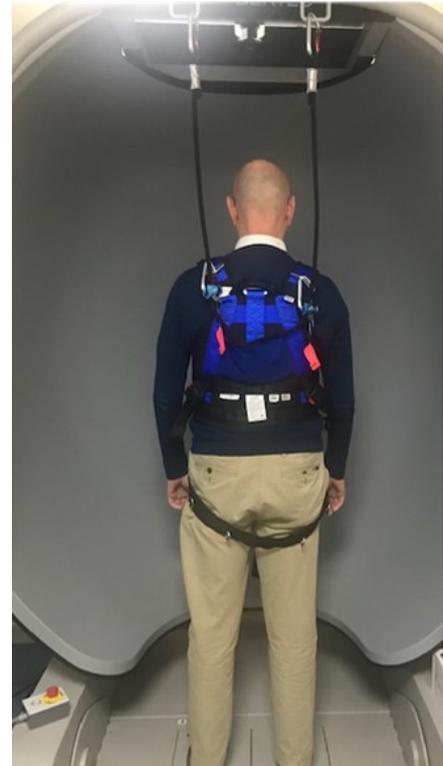
You will be asked to wear a safety harness and stand on a platform.

Sometimes the platform you are standing on may sway beneath your feet.

During the test you may be asked to open or close your eyes.

There will be lights projected onto a screen in front of you which may move.

This test will aim to measure how well you maintain your balance in different situations.



- **Dix-Hallpike test**

You will be asked to wear some goggles with video cameras so we can see and measure your eye movements.

To do the test we will either

- sit you on a couch, move your head and ask you to lie down, or
- strap you in a special chair called the TRV chair. In the chair we control all the movements for you.

This tests for a specific type of dizziness called benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV), where specific head movements cause vertigo. We can tell if you have this condition by watching your eye movements. If you have this type of balance problem you may get a turning sensation when we do this test.



