

# Having a tilt table test to help find the cause of dizziness, fainting or blackouts

Respiratory Physiology Department

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Information for Patients

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## What is a tilt table test?

A tilt table test helps the doctor see changes in your heart rate and blood pressure when you go from lying down to a standing up position. They measure your heart rate and blood pressure while you lie on a specially designed bed. This bed can be slowly tilted upright.

You have been referred for a tilt table test to see if we can find out the cause of your symptoms. This test is useful if you have suffered from falls, giddy spells, dizziness or faints/ blackouts, which may be because of your blood pressure or heart rate.

## Where do I need to go?

Please come through the **South Entrance of Glenfield Hospital**. The department is on the right hand side as you come through the entrance doors. Please come to the reception desk. A staff member will then take you to the testing room.

The testing room needs to be as relaxed and as quiet as possible. We kindly ask any relatives or friends to stay in our reception area.

## What happens during the test?

There will be a highly experienced physiologist with you during the test. A doctor will oversee the test.

1. The physiologist will ask you to lie down on a special bed called a tilt table.
2. We will put a strap across your knees and stomach/chest to help make sure you feel secure.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.uhleicester.nhs.uk](http://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](mailto:uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net)

3. We will put stickers on your chest and stomach to check your heartbeat.
4. You will have a blood pressure cuff on 1 of your arms and a smaller cuff on a finger. The finger cuff measures the blood pressure of every heartbeat. It pumps up and down during the test in time to your pulse. All these measurements will be displayed on a computer screen behind you.
5. You can rest for a few minutes once we have taken the measurements. A senior physiologist/doctor will then come in to start the test. They will talk to you about the test and you can ask any questions that you may have.

### **If you are older than 45 years of age:**

Before the bed is tilted the doctor may start by having a listen to both sides of your neck with a stethoscope. They may then want to rub (for 5 seconds) quite firmly on each side of your neck. They do this to see if your heart rate slows slightly or if your blood pressure falls, and brings on any of your symptoms.

At this point you may need an injection of a drug called atropine into a vein in your hand. This makes sure your heart rate does not slow down. The doctor will then repeat the neck rub.

The doctor may repeat this process while you are in the tilted position.

### **Risks of the neck rub:**

If the artery wall in the neck is already badly damaged, it is possible that the neck rub could cause a stroke. The chances of this happening are rare (1 in 1500 patients).

You can have the test without the neck rub and sometimes it is not needed. However if you decide not to have this part done at all, the information we get from the test might not be enough to find out the cause of your symptoms.

6. The bed is then tilted very slowly electronically. It is tilted until your head is upright and you are in an almost standing position with your feet on a platform.
7. You will stay in this position for about 40 minutes whilst we check your heart rate and blood pressure. During this time you may have your symptoms.
8. At the end of 40 minutes if you have not had any of your symptoms, we may give you drug that is sprayed into your mouth. This drug can help make symptoms similar to those you have had (dizzy, faint). We then monitor you in the standing position for another 10 minutes.
9. Once the test is finished, we lower the bed slowly back to a lying position. We then taken off all of the stickers and equipment.

## **How long will the test take?**

The tests will last about 1 hour but you will be in the department for longer. This is because it takes time to set up all the equipment and to make sure you are fully recovered before you go home.

You can expect to be in the department for **about 2 hours** but this is different for each patient.

## Are there any risks with the test?

The test is extremely safe.

The reason you are having this test is to try to find the cause of your symptoms. You may have these symptoms during the time you are with us. If your symptoms include faints/ blackouts (loss of consciousness), it is possible that this might happen during the test. All of the doctors and physiologists doing this test are experienced. It is often possible to stop the testing before you have any loss of consciousness.

## How do I prepare for the test?

- Please use the contact details below to confirm your attendance. Please use these same details if you need to rearrange as soon as possible.
- We strongly advise that you come with a friend or relative. This is so they can drive you home in case your symptoms are brought on during the test.
- Please **fast (no food or drink) for 4 hours** before your appointment time. You can drink water if you need to. If you are diabetic, please eat and drink (no caffeine) as you normally would.
- Please wear a short sleeved top and trousers. Try not to wear a dress or long tunic.
- Do not wear support or compression stockings during the test.
- You should ideally wear flat, comfortable shoes.
- Please continue with all medication as prescribed. Do this unless your doctor has told you not. You may also have instruction in your appointment letter about this. If you are not sure about this, please ask.
- Please bring a list of your current medication (and dosage) with you.

## Contact details

Respiratory Physiology Department: **0116 258 3420**

Email address: [uhl-tr.respiratoryservice@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.respiratoryservice@nhs.net)

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل  
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।  
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net)