

What if I have any questions?

If you have any questions please contact the Audiology Department as follows

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BALANCE & DIZZINESS ASSESSMENT

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

This information was correct at the time of printing. While the Trust makes every reasonable effort to keep its information leaflets up to date, very recent changes may not yet be reflected in the guidance and you should discuss this with the Audiologist at the time of your appointment.

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Audiology Department

Sunderland Royal Hospital

What is this leaflet about and who is it for?

This leaflet is for patients who have been referred for assessment of their balance or dizziness. The balance assessment appointment should be within 6 weeks of referral from the consultant and may help to determine the cause of your balance problems.

Is there anything I need to do before attending this appointment?

The assessment can be affected by several factors. In order to make the results as reliable as possible, please avoid the following:

- Any medication you are taking specifically for dizziness for 48 hours prior to your appointment. You may resume your medication once the tests have been performed.
- Alcohol, for 48 hours prior to your appointment.
- Eye make up such as mascara and eye liner on the day of the appointment.

What tests will be done?

To maintain a sense of balance, the brain depends on good information from the balance organs (located in the inner ear), the eyes, and the body (such as joints, soles of feet, head/neck position). For most of the tests, special goggles are used to record eye movements, which tell us how well the balance organs are working.

Eye-tracking tests may be performed to check a special reflex between your eyes and the balance organs in the inner ear. These involve watching a light move on a screen.

Positional tests may be performed to see whether your dizziness is related to any particular body or head movements.

A Caloric test may be performed to assess how well your balance organs are working. To do this test it is necessary to run warm and / or cool water (or cool air) into your ears.

Useful information

The appointment will last between 60 – 90 minutes depending on which tests have been requested.

Sometimes people experience slight dizziness for a short while after the assessment, so it is advisable to avoid driving yourself home afterwards.

We would recommend that you remain in the waiting room for a short while after the tests until you are sure you are steady on your feet.

You are welcome to bring a family member or friend with you to the appointment.

How will I find out the results of the tests?

After the test has been performed, staff will briefly discuss the results with you. A report will be written and forwarded to your Ear Nose and Throat Consultant in time for your next appointment with them.

It is known that certain types of dizziness may be eased by performing balance exercises. These exercises are designed to “re-train” and “re-strengthen” your balance system and ease your symptoms.

Although they are not suitable for every patient or type of balance problem, you may be given some general advice and a programme or exercises to follow, if it is deemed appropriate.