

Adult audiology

Your balance assessment appointment

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet explains what will happen when you come to the hospital for a balance assessment appointment. You have been referred to the audiology department by an ear, nose and throat (ENT) or neurology specialist to have a balance assessment.

If there is a problem with one of our balance organs, it may cause dizziness or imbalance. During this appointment, an audiologist will carry out a series of tests to help us diagnose your symptoms.

Before your appointment

Please let us know if you need an interpreter for this appointment using the contact details below.

Please make sure your ears are clear of wax, so we can do your balance assessment. Ask your GP or practice nurse to check your ears if you think you have wax.

Before the test, please do not:

- take anti-dizziness medication or sedatives within 48 hours of your appointment. Please continue taking all other essential medications (check with your GP if you're unsure)
- drink alcohol or take recreational drugs within 48 hours of your appointment
- eat a heavy meal within 4 hours of your appointment
- wear eye makeup during the appointment, as this may affect the results

If you have done any of the above, please tell your audiologist before the testing begins.

Some of the tests may make you feel dizzy for a short time, so we advise you not to drive immediately after the test.

What shall I bring to the appointment?

- a spare top/shirt, in case clothes get wet during testing
- a list of the medication you take

How long is the appointment?

The appointment lasts between 90 and 120 minutes.

What will happen in the appointment?

We'll ask you about your medical history, balance and any related symptoms. We'll explain each test to you during the appointment.

To start with, we will do the following tests:

Pure tone audiometry

This test measures your hearing levels and is performed in a soundproof room. The test takes 15-30 minutes.

Tympanometry

This is a quick pressure test lasting a few minutes, which gives us information about your eardrums.

We'll then do one or more of the following tests to check your balance function, depending on your history and symptoms:

Video head impulse test (vHIT)

During this test your head will be turned in different directions while wearing goggles to record eye movements. This test takes 15-20 minutes.

Caloric test

For this test a small amount of water will be trickled into your ears while you're lying down. This will take approximately 20-40 minutes.

Vestibular-evoked myogenic potentials (VEMPs)

Sticky pads will be placed on your forehead and neck, or around your eyes, while clicking sounds are played into your ears. This will take 10-15 minutes.

Eye movement recordings/Videonystagmography (VNG)

You will be asked to track a moving light on a screen with your eyes while video we use goggles to record your eye movements. This can take up to 10 minutes.

Positional Tests

For these tests, we will put you into different positions such as from a sitting to laying position and observe your eyes while you are in each position. Testing may last for 10 to 15 minutes depending on the results.

When will I get my results?

We'll usually explain the results to you after the testing is finished. Sometimes the specialist who referred you might need to review the results. If this needs to happen we will contact you with the outcome.

Contact details

If you cannot make your appointment or have any questions or concerns please call the audiology department on **020 3311 1021** or email us at audiology.imperial@nhs.net.

How to find adult audiology

At Charing Cross Hospital, we are on the first floor of the South Wing.

If you need **hospital transport**, please call **020 3311 5353** for an eligibility check.

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk

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