

Essential information from the balance clinic

The aim of this information sheet is to help answer some of the questions you may have about your appointment in the balance clinic. If you have any questions or concerns after reading this leaflet, please talk to the doctor, audiologist, physiotherapist or nurse caring for you. Contact details for the balance clinic are given at the end of this leaflet.

Why have I been sent an appointment for the balance clinic?

You have been referred to the balance clinic by your own doctor (GP) or by one of the hospital doctors because you have been experiencing dizziness or unsteadiness. Your appointment will be in the ear, nose and throat (ENT) department at Guy's Hospital and will be approximately two hours long.

What will happen during my appointment?

You will see a physiotherapist and an audiologist who specialises in dizziness and balance difficulties. You will be asked questions about your symptoms and will undergo a series of tests to find out the cause of your problems. The following information explains how you should prepare yourself for the appointment and how you might feel after the tests.

What should I do before I come for my appointment?

In preparation for the tests:

- Ideally, you should stop taking anti-dizziness medicines 48 hours before your appointment because they may affect the test results. Please first check with your GP that it is safe for you to stop taking these. Examples of anti-dizziness medicines include prochlorperazine (Stemetil®), betahistine (Serc®), and antihistamines such as cinnarizine, cyclizine and promethazine.
- Make sure that your doctor or practice nurse has checked that your ears are clear of wax before the appointment.
- Avoid alcohol for at least 48 hours.
- Do not drink coffee on the morning of your appointment.
- Wear comfortable clothes to the appointment.
- Avoid putting on make-up around your eyes and ears.

Please note that a late arrival may result in you being given an alternative appointment.

What should I bring with me?

On the day of your appointment, please bring:

- your appointment letter
- a list of your current medications
- any recent doctors' reports.

How will the tests make me feel?

Some of the tests may make you feel slightly dizzy. This feeling should stop within a few minutes of completing the tests.

As a precaution we suggest that you:

- do not drive immediately following the tests
- bring someone with you for reassurance.

When will I be given my test results?

The physiotherapist or audiologist will try to tell you as much as possible about your test results at the end of your appointment. Some of the test results will not be available until after your appointment and these will be sent to you and your doctor.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your balance clinic appointment, please contact the balance clinic appointments team on **020 7188 8872** (then select option 2), Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm.

Further sources of information

Pharmacy medicines helpline

For information about any medicines that you have been prescribed at Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals, you can speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) – To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

t: 020 7188 8801 e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Knowledge & Information Centre (KIC) – For more information about health conditions, support groups and local services, or to search the internet and send emails, please visit the KIC on the Ground Floor, North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital.

t: 020 7188 3416

Language support services – If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 fax: 020 7188 5953

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