

# Essential information from the balance clinic

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about your appointment in the balance clinic. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor, audiologist, physiotherapist or nurse caring for you. Contact details for the balance clinic are 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 of you have been experiencing dizziness or unsteadiness. Your appointment will be held at Guy's Hospital in the ear, nose and throat (ENT) department and will last for approximately two hours.

## What happens during my appointment?

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

## What should I do before I come for my appointment?

### One week before your appointment:

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

### Two days before your appointment:

- Ideally, you should stop taking anti-dizziness medicines two days before your appointment because they may affect the assessment. Most patients can stop these medicines safely. Please check with your GP first 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.
- Avoid alcohol for at least 48 hours before your appointment.

### On the day of your appointment:

- Do not drink coffee on the morning of your appointment
- Wear comfortable clothes
- 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 receive the test results?**

At the end of your appointment, the physiotherapist or audiologist will try to tell you as much information as possible. However, 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 (select Option 2), Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets)

### Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

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

### Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

**t:** 020 7188 8801 (PALS)

**e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

**t:** 020 7188 3514 (complaints)

**e:** [complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk)

### Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

**t:** 020 7188 8815 **e:** [languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

**t:** 111

### NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

**w:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support.

Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

**t:** 0800 731 0319 **e:** [members@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:members@gstt.nhs.uk) **w:** [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership)

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