Essential information from the balance clinic

This leaflet will answer some of 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 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 held at Guy’s Hospital in the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Department and may last more than two hours.

What happens during my appointment?
During your appointment, you will see a team that may include a doctor, a physiotherapist and/or 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 (GP) 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 (including mascara on your eye lashes) and ears.

Please note that a late arrival may result in you being given an alternative appointment on a different day.
What should I bring with me?
On the day of your appointment, please bring:
- your appointment letter
- a list of your current medications (including any herbal or over-the-counter remedies)
- 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 after having the tests
- bring someone with you for reassurance.

When will I receive the test results?
At the end of your appointment, the clinician will try to tell you as many results 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 GP.