

# Vestibular balance assessment

## Introduction

This leaflet gives you information which will help you to prepare for your balance assessment at the Hearing Services Department. You will be seen by audiologists specialising in hearing and balance. The assessment will last up to 2 hours.

## What to expect at your balance assessment?

The aim of the assessment will be to investigate the possible cause of your imbalance. We will start by asking you questions about your balance problems. You will also be asked to go over your history again. This will allow the audiologists to have a clear record of your balance problems. This will also help the audiologists to decide what tests are necessary.

## Tests

All tests will be fully explained to you before they are started. The tests will only be carried out with your consent.

The hearing test, tympanometry and videonystagmography will be performed while you are sitting down. You will be asked to lie down on a bed for the caloric test.

- Hearing test – The hearing and balance functions of your inner ear are closely related. Your hearing will be tested if it has not been done recently. During the test you will hear a range of tones through headphones. You will be asked to press a button every time you hear these tones.
- Tympanometry – This will test the condition of your middle ear and mobility of your ear drum (tympanic membrane). A soft tip is placed into your ear canal. You will feel a slight pressure for a few seconds and hear a tone.
- Videonystagmography – This is a test of your balance system. You will be asked to carry out a series of tasks by watching a red light move along a light bar. You will be asked to wear goggles with cameras for this test. This will allow the audiologists to watch and record your eye movements.

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Department

**Hearing Services**

Review due

**April 2024**

## Patient Information

- Caloric test – The final test requires putting cool and warm water in your ear canals for about 30 seconds. This will allow the audiologists to compare the function of your balance system in each ear.

## Before your appointment

### 1 week before

Please make sure that your GP or Practice Nurse has checked that your ears are clear of wax **1 week** before your appointment.

### 48 hours before

- You should not take anti-dizziness medication. Please ask your GP if it is safe for you to stop taking these.
- Do not drink any alcohol or take any recreational drugs.

### On the day of your appointment

- Do not apply eye make-up; this includes eyeliner, mascara, and eye-shadow.
  - Eat no more than a light breakfast/lunch at least 2 hours before your appointment.
  - No smoking for 3 hours before the test.
  - Contact lenses should not be worn, please bring glasses.
- Failure to do the above will affect the reliability and accuracy of results.

## What should I expect?

Some parts of the test may make you feel dizzy. This feeling usually passes within a few minutes. As a precaution we suggest that you:

- Do not drive for 24 hours after the test.
- Bring someone with you to escort you home as you may feel dizzy after the tests. Failure to do so will result in the appointment being rescheduled.

After your appointment:

- You may take the medication needed to control your imbalance.
- Once the dizziness settles, you should be able to continue with your normal daily routine.

**Patient  
Information****Contact information**

If you have any concerns and questions, please contact the Hearing Services Department or your GP.

**Hearing Services Department**

Tel: 0300 422 8378

Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm

Email: [ghn-tr.audiology.appts@nhs.net](mailto:ghn-tr.audiology.appts@nhs.net)

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 0800 019 3282 (Freephone)

Email: [ghn-tr.pals.gloshospitals@nhs.net](mailto:ghn-tr.pals.gloshospitals@nhs.net)

**Further information**

For further information or advice about balance or any aspect of deafness or related ear problems, you may wish to contact the following organisation.

**Action on Hearing Loss**

Freephone Information Line:

Tel: 0808 808 0123

Textphone: 0808 808 9000

Email: [informationline@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:informationline@hearingloss.org.uk)

Website: [www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/)

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