

**Patient
Information**

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 take up to 2 hours.

What to expect at your balance assessment?

The aim of the assessment is 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 and help them 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. For this test you will be asked to wear goggles with cameras to allow the audiologists to watch and record your eye movements.

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Department

Hearing Services

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- **Caloric test** – The final test requires trickling cool and warm water in your ear canals for about 30 seconds, which will be collected in a small bowl placed under your ear. 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 during this period. Please ask your GP if it is safe for you to stop taking these medications. If you are unable to stop taking your anti-dizziness medication, then please contact Hearing Services.
- Do not drink any alcohol or take any recreational drugs during this period.

On the day of your appointment

- Do not apply eye make-up; this includes eyeliner, mascara and eye-shadow.
- Only eat a light breakfast or lunch no later than 2 hours before your appointment time.
- Do not smoke or vape for 3 hours before the test.

Failure to do the above will affect the reliability and accuracy of the test 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.

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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.

Contact information

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

Hearing Services Department

Tel: 0300 422 6919

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

Email: 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

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.

RNID

Freephone Information Line

Tel: 0808 808 0123

Email: contact@rnid.org.uk

Website: www.rnid.org.uk

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Making a choice

Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>