

# Balance Function Tests

Audiology Department



Patient information leaflet

This leaflet aims to provide information for patients attending the Royal Surrey County Hospital for balance function tests. It describes the different tests that may be performed, along with information about further treatments.

## **Why have I been referred for balance tests?**

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Balance tests give doctors/clinicians more information about your current balance problems. It also helps them decide what the best possible treatment would be for your current needs. If you do not have the recommended balance tests it may be difficult for doctors/clinicians to offer you the best possible treatment.

## **What does the appointment involve?**

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The appointment involves a number of tests. The tests will be conducted to see if your balance system is working correctly. You will be seen by an Audiologist who is highly trained and specialises in balance testing.

You will receive some questionnaires prior to your appointment. Please complete these questionnaires before attending the appointment. The Audiologist will spend some time going through these with you and talking about your experiences. They will then complete a number of balance tests with you which will take about 1 hour to 2 hours in total. You may need a further appointment, but this depends on your results for the day.

## **What are the balance tests?**

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Some or all of the following tests may be conducted in your balance appointment:

### **Caloric Testing**

This test is important for determining if the balance part of your ear is working. It involves changing the temperature of the outer ear canal by putting warm/cool water (or air) in the ear. The water will flow for 30 seconds into the ear. The total test time for both ears is about 20 to 30 minutes with rest periods included.

### **Vestibular Evoked Myogenic Potentials**

This test looks at another balance part of the inner ear. It involves putting five sticky skin pads on the face, neck and clavicle bone and listening to some sounds. The testing time is about 15–20 minutes.

### **Video Nystagmography**

There is a link between the eyes and the balance organs in the inner ear. Video nystagmography is when the eye movements are recorded with a video camera. You will be given a pair of goggles to wear for the test. You will then be asked to follow a beam of light with your eyes. The equipment is very sensitive and follows the movement of the pupil of each eye. The test will take from 30 minutes to 1 hour.

### **Computerised Clinical Test of Sensory Interaction and Balance**

The sensory organisation test is a test to find out how well you are combining the information from your senses for balance. The senses include your ears, eyes, and muscles. The Audiologist will ask you to stand on a balance platform. The platform is stable and does not move. The test lasts for approximately 10-20 minutes.

## **Are there any risks?**

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The appointment is fairly long; you may therefore become tired after testing. Any other risks of testing are dependent on your personal history so please contact the department if you have any further questions.

## **What happens after the testing is finished?**

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The audiologist will briefly explain the results, but detailed results will be explained to you by the doctor who referred you.

The tests may show that balance exercises may be helpful for you to reduce your symptoms. If so, this therapy will be discussed with you and you may be referred to the Vestibular Rehabilitation Clinic. This clinic may be in Audiology or Physiotherapy depending on your needs.

## **What happens in the Vestibular Rehabilitation Clinic in Audiology?**

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Initially you will be referred to a group Introductory session in which the details of vestibular rehabilitation will be explained. If you decide to go ahead you will then be referred for individual sessions.

The clinician will have a discussion with you to find out your goal for therapy. The clinician may then either do a treatment manoeuvre (known as particle repositioning manoeuvres) and/or develop a tailored exercise program. You will be seen for three (or more) individual sessions as well as one group session in your therapy program.

## What do I do if I have questions about my appointment?

If you have any questions about your appointment please contact the Audiology Department on **01483 464 108** and one of our administration clerks will be able to help you.

## Further information

The following organisations also provide further information.

### **The Ménière's Society**

- Helpline: 01306 876883
- [www.menieres.org.uk](http://www.menieres.org.uk)

### **Brain & Spine Helpline**

- Tel: 0808 808 1000
- Email: [helpline@brainandspine.org.uk](mailto:helpline@brainandspine.org.uk)

## References

Balance Function Assessment and Management (2007) Jacobson, G. & Shepard, N.: Plural Publishing Inc.





## Contact details

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### Audiology Department

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**Email:** [rsc-tr.Audiology@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.Audiology@nhs.net)

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### PALS and Advocacy contact details

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Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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