

## Tilt Table Test

### What is a Tilt Test?

A tilt table test is used to help establish the cause of fainting and falls. It may also help the doctor to decide the best treatment.

A tilt table test allows the doctor to observe changes in your pulse and blood pressure when you go from lying down to standing up.

The test will normally be done as an outpatient. Prior to the appointment your doctor will advise if you need to stop any tablets and whether you should fast.

The tilt test is painless and is used to help identify symptoms and reach a diagnosis.

### Who may need a Tilt Test?

Patients who experience symptoms of loss of consciousness (blackouts), dizziness or severe lightheadedness may need a tilt test if a doctor suspects that a drop in blood pressure or heart rate may be involved.

Normally blood pressure and heart rate will change according to the body's needs (sleeping or exercising) but if it is thought that your body is not responding properly, causing loss of consciousness (syncope) or symptoms of dizziness and nausea (pre-syncope), then a tilt test may be requested.

### What is involved?

When you arrive, you will be asked to change into a hospital gown and possibly remove any make up. This is so the practitioner monitoring your test can note the pallor of your skin should the test induce a drop in your blood pressure/heart rate. Safety belts will be placed around your body to make you feel secure as you are tilted to an upright position. There will be a footplate at the bottom of the bed to rest your feet.

Electrode stickers and leads will be attached to your chest in order to monitor your heart rate and rhythm during the test. A small cuff to measure your blood pressure will also be placed around your arm or finger. You will feel the cuff inflate and deflate throughout the test.

Your tilt table test will be performed in a quiet, warm room and it will be monitored by a medical professional who is experienced in this test.

While you lie quietly on the table, recordings of your blood pressure and heart rhythm will be taken and monitored during the test. The table will then move slowly up and forwards until you are in an almost upright position. The test will last for up to 45 minutes.

Most procedures today will include a drug challenge. You will be supine for five minutes, upright at 60 – 70 degrees for around 20 minutes and then a drug such as nitroglycerine is sprayed under the tongue, whilst the upright position is maintained for a further 15 minutes. This is to improve the sensitivity of the test.

For further information contact STARS

## How will you feel during the test?

The symptoms that you may experience during the test include lightheadedness, nausea, feeling cold and clammy, sweating, a 'spacey' feeling or the sensation that you are about to faint/blackout (pre-syncope symptoms). If you do lose consciousness (syncope) this normally will only last for a short period of time and the bed will be lowered whilst you recover.

Some people will develop symptoms even though their blood pressure remains normal. This would be considered a negative test.

**You can ask for the test to be stopped at any time**

## How long will a Tilt Test take?

The length of time the test will take depends on when, or if, you experience a drop in blood pressure or heart rate. Some people will demonstrate this within the first few minutes, whilst others may finish the complete test without any reaction. This would be classed as a negative test. If no results are recorded, the bed will be lowered and the test finished. You will be allowed to fully recover before standing up and getting dressed.

## What happens after the test?

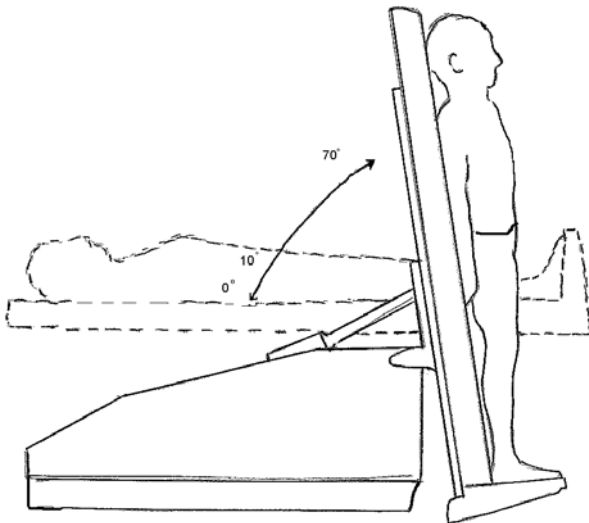
If you develop a drop in blood pressure/heart rate with associated symptoms, your test will be classed as positive. You may experience all the usual sensations that occur during and after a natural episode.

Even if you have a negative test, it is common to report feeling tired but otherwise fine.

The results of your test will be reported to your doctor. An appointment will be made for you to return to discuss these and any further treatment options that may be appropriate.

## Going home!

It is recommended that you are accompanied by a friend or relative so they can drive you home after the test. You may also wish to bring a change of clothes as some people may, very occasionally, experience loss of bladder control during the test.



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For further information contact STARS