

Dizziness Assessment with Polyclinic Audiology

Your physician has referred you for diagnostic testing due to symptoms of dizziness, vertigo or imbalance. You may have been referred to the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) department, and then re-directed to Audiology for scheduling.

WHY DO I NEED THIS TEST BEFORE SEEING ENT?

This series of tests helps the physician determine if the cause of your dizziness is ear related and, if so, what kind of ear disorder. If the ENT physician sees a patient prior to this testing, they routinely send them to Audiology before having them return for additional follow up, which adds additional time and visits to the process.

WHY CAN'T I TAKE MY MEDICATIONS BEFORE TESTING? WHY CAN'T I EAT FOR FOUR HOURS PRIOR?

The dizziness assessment involves a series of tests, some of which are very sensitive to anything that works as a stimulant or suppressant to your body. Even if you have taken a medication for years and it is not related to your symptoms, the test results can be altered by their effects. The most accurate results are gotten from a completely "clean" system, which is also why you are asked to fast for a short period prior to testing.

You **should** stay on medications for high blood pressure, cholesterol, seizure disorders, antibiotics, thyroid levels and birth control. If you are unsure about a medication you are taking, please contact the Audiology staff for guidance.

*****If listed medications are taken within 48 hours of the appointment, it will need to be rescheduled to another day.**

WHAT IF THERE ARE MEDICATIONS ON THE LIST THAT I CANNOT GO OFF FOR 48 HOURS?

In cases where an individual cannot safely discontinue for the required time, it is best to contact the physician that referred you for assessment for alternatives.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE TEST?

First, the Audiologist will discuss the history of your symptoms, especially the onset, quality and duration of your dizziness.

The testing itself uses infrared video goggles to record small eye movements while in a seated position. You will be asked to look at various light stimuli to see how your eyes track and respond. There are brief sections of the test where you will be asked to keep your eyes open in a dark environment.

The Audiologist will also guide you through various head and body positions while wearing the video goggles. All of these movements are slow and controlled. The movements are not intended to provoke vertigo, however if you do experience symptoms in certain positions, you will be asked to be in these positions briefly. Let the audiologist know if you have any chronic pain or mobility issues in your neck or back.

In most cases, the last section of testing involves looking at a target on the wall while your head is moved in small brief motions by the audiologist.

Less often, a stream of cool, and then warm, air is administered to your ear canals for a minute at a time while you are in a reclining position.

WILL THIS TEST MAKE ME DIZZY?

The majority of patients tolerate testing very well and have no additional symptoms during their appointment. However, if you are acutely and severely dizzy, or your dizziness is reliably caused by a specific position, you might feel your symptoms activated during testing. You do not need to be symptomatic in order for the test result to be valid and helpful in your diagnosis.