



Head Up Tilt Test (HUTT)

What is it?

Tilt table testing is a test used to assess the causes of fainting. Sometimes it is used to investigate fast heart rates on standing.

Why is it done?

The test is done to see if you have a tendency to faint and if you do, the test is used to find out whether the main cause lies with your pulse rate or your blood pressure. The test can also help diagnose Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS). This is an excessive increase in heart rate when standing up. It typically causes dizziness, fainting, sweating and other symptoms.

What happens during the test?

Please **do not** eat two hours before your appointment time.

After you are called in on cold days, you will be asked to wash your hands with warm water. We need your hands to be warm as it helps to measure your blood pressure using a sensor on a finger.

You will be asked to lie on a bed with a foot board. This bed can be tilted so that you end up in a near standing position, with the foot board to support you. Some ECG (electrocardiogram) electrodes will be connected to your chest, a blood pressure cuff will be placed on your arm and a cuff will be placed on a finger. The cuff on your arm will only need to be used once and the cuff on your finger will pulsate throughout your test as it tracks your blood pressure. It usually takes about five minutes to finish a calibration procedure and for readings to stabilise.

Sometimes different cuff sizes or different fingers are tried before the readings are satisfactory. If your doctor has requested us to perform a carotid sinus massage (CSM) test, this will be done next. This procedure involves massaging the artery in the neck. The sensors in this artery help to regulate your blood pressure and in some people these sensors have become over sensitive. CSM does carry a risk of transient ischemic attack (TIA) or stroke of about 1 in 1000 and your consent is required before this test is carried out. You may choose not to have this part of the test performed. The rest of the tilt test does not carry this risk.

Next, you will be tilted to a near standing position for 40 minutes to see if a faint can be provoked. If you faint before the 40 minutes are over, the bed will be promptly returned to a horizontal position. It is important that during these 40 minutes, you receive as little external stimuli as possible and for this reason no talking or non-verbal communication is allowed during this time. This means the test will be rather boring.

At the end of the test all the equipment will be disconnected and you will be allowed to go home (or the ward if you are an in-patient). The results of the test will be sent to the requesting consultant.

Information for Patients

It is advisable to bring somebody with you to your appointment as you might feel dizzy after the test. Some patients prefer to wait in our waiting areas before starting the journey home. If you do bring somebody to stay for the duration of the test, this person might want to bring some reading material to help pass the time. We do not routinely allow friends or relatives into the test room with you, however if you or someone you care for has additional needs please let the team know on the day.

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk.

Research and Audit

UHB is a centre for teaching and research. Some of the data collected during your scan may be used for audit to check on the quality of what we do and also to support research projects that do not involve further contact with you. If you do not wish us to use this data, please let us know when you attend for your appointment.

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