

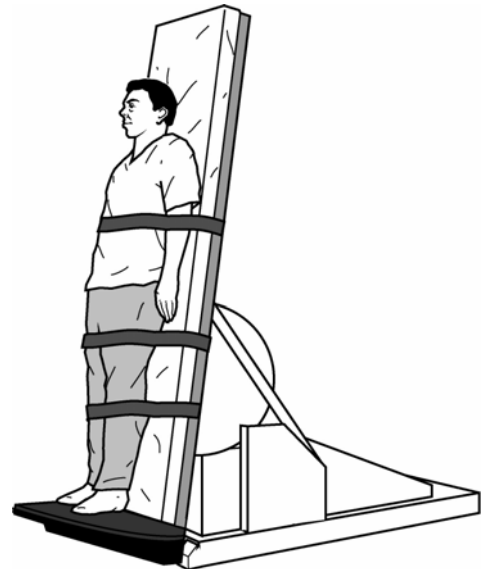
# Tilt Table Test

A tilt table test is used to check the cause of fainting spells or severe lightheadedness by watching how your body responds to changes in position. Syncope (sink-o-pee) or fainting occurs for different reasons. It can be from a nervous system reaction that causes the heart to slow, the blood vessels to expand and the blood pressure to drop. When the blood pressure drops, the blood flow to the brain is less. This can cause fainting. This condition is called postural hypotension.



Tilt table testing may also be useful for people who have severe lightheadedness or dizziness which does not cause them to faint but forces them to sit or lie down.

The test involves being tilted, always with your head up, at different angles for a period of time. Your heart rhythm and rate, blood pressure and other symptoms will be closely checked with changes in position. The test takes about 45 minutes. You will be in the pre-procedure area for about 2 hours and post-procedure recovery area for another hour.



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## **Before the Test**

- Check with your doctor to see if there are any medicines that you should not be taking for 2 to 3 days before the test.
- If you are to take medicine the morning of your test day, take the medicine with as little water as possible.
- If you have diabetes and take medicine to control your blood sugar, check with your doctor about how to adjust your diabetes medicine.
- Do not eat or drink anything at least 4 hours before the test. This helps reduce the chance of nausea.
- You will wear a hospital gown during the test.
- Do not wear or bring any jewelry or valuables with you.
- Arrange for someone to drive you home after the test if you are an outpatient. You will not be allowed to drive right after the test.
- Bring all of your medicines with you so the doctor can check the names and doses for each medicine. Be sure to tell the doctor if you take any herbal or dietary supplements and any over the counter medicines as well.
- You will be asked to sign a consent form for this test. Please be sure to ask any questions you have about the test.

## **How is the test done?**

The tilt table is a special bed with a footboard and a motor that can be controlled to tilt at different angles. You will lie down on the tilt table, flat on your back. You will be tilted so that your head is always above your feet. You will never be tilted upside down.

The nurse will start an intravenous (IV) line in your arm to give you fluids and medicines during the test. You will be connected to monitors to check your heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and oxygen levels during the test. Three or more safety straps will be placed across your chest and legs to hold you in place on the table.

You will be awake but you will be asked to lie quietly and keep your legs still. During the test, you may have no symptoms or you may feel very uncomfortable. You may feel lightheaded, sick to your stomach, dizzy, heart palpitations or fluttering in the chest, vision changes or you may faint. **Be sure you tell the nurse or doctor about any symptoms you have during the test as they occur.**

**If you become very uncomfortable and cannot go on, the test will be stopped.** If you should faint, the table will be returned to the flat position and the test stopped.

## **Part 1**

The test starts with a quiet period. Then the table will be slowly tilted to an almost standing position. Your head will be up and the footboard will support you. You will be checked at several positions and then returned to a flat position.

## **Part 2**

The second part of the test begins after giving you a medicine to stress your heart. Nitroglycerine or Isuprel are often used to cause the same affect as adrenaline. Adrenaline is a hormone produced by the body when you exercise or when you are angry or feel stress. The medicine is given slowly into the IV and increased based on how your heart responds to the medicine. This medicine may make you feel nervous, jittery or you may feel that your heart is beating faster or stronger. These symptoms will stop quickly as the medicine wears off.

## **How long does the test take?**

Expect to be in the test area about 1 ½ to 2 hours. The length of the test will depend on how you respond, but it is often done in 45 minutes.

## **After the Test**

- It is best to rest for several hours after the test. You can start back on your regular foods and fluids. Most patients return to feeling normal within 15 minutes after the test, but the test is quite tiring.
- Take your medicines that you were told to hold before the test.
- Have someone drive you home.

## **Test Results**

- If you faint during the test, it is considered 'positive'. Your doctor will be sent your test results.
- If you do not faint during the test it is considered 'negative'. You and your doctor will discuss other tests that you may need to find the cause of your fainting.

- **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).**