

FROM THE OFFICE OF DR.

Tilt-table testing

Fainting, also called syncope (pronounced “SIN-ko-pea”), is caused by a temporary decrease in blood flow to the brain. If you have syncope, your doctor may order a tilt-table test to determine why the blood flow is decreased and how to treat it. The purpose of the test is not to make you faint, although some people do faint during the test.

What happens before the test?

An intravenous line will be placed in a vein in your arm or the back of your hand. It may be used to take blood samples and also to give medications (if you need them) during the test.

Blood pressure cuffs will be placed around both arms, and small, sticky patches called electrodes will be placed on your chest. The electrodes are connected to a monitor that shows your heart’s rate and rhythm.

What happens during the test?

You will lie on a motorized table with a metal footboard. For your safety, soft straps will be placed across your body to secure you when the table is tilted during the test. Your blood pressure and heart rate will be constantly monitored. You will be asked to remain as still and quiet as possible so that the results can be accurately recorded.

A nurse or technician will tilt the table to different angles during the test—30 degrees for 2 minutes,

then 45 degrees for 2 minutes, and then 70 degrees for up to 45 minutes. You will always be “head up”; you will never be upside-down. When the table is at 30 and 45 degrees, you will feel as if you are lying on a steep hill. When it is at 70 degrees, you will be in an upright position and your feet will be supported by the footboard at the end of the table.

How long will the test last?

About 1½ hours—plan on being at the hospital for about 2 hours total. You will need a responsible adult to drive you home.

Should I take my medications?

Yes. You can take your prescription medications as you normally would, with water. However, do not take diuretics or laxatives before the test.

If you have questions or need help adjusting your medications, please call your physician. Do not discontinue any medication without talking to your physician first.



Can I eat before the test?

Eat a normal meal the evening before your procedure. *Do not* eat or drink anything except small amounts of water for 4 hours before the test. If you must take medications, please take them with small sips of water.

If you have diabetes, please request a 10:30 AM appointment time for your test so you can eat a light breakfast before 7 AM and also complete the test in time for lunch.

What do the test results mean?

A positive test means that you may have a condition that causes an abnormal change in blood pressure or heart rate when you stand up. A negative test means that you did not show signs of such a condition. In either case, additional tests may be needed to diagnose your condition.