

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a space shuttle launch, viewed from an elevated angle. The shuttle is ascending vertically, leaving a large plume of white smoke and steam behind it. The launch pad and surrounding infrastructure are visible at the bottom of the frame. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

GOSH Balance Testing Clinic

Come with us on a journey into space!
Information for families

**Great Ormond Street Hospital
for Children NHS Foundation Trust**

Welcome to the Balance Clinic. Your child has been referred to us so that we can carry out a series of tests to assess his or her balance function, and to work out what is causing any problems. We aim to make the tests as fun and relaxed as possible for your child by using a space-theme journey. This leaflet explains the preparation required for the tests and what will happen during each test.

Preparing for the tests

Please allow plenty of time to travel to Great Ormond Street Hospital. It is important that you arrive on time for your appointment. Your child is able to eat and drink as normal, but a light rather than heavy meal before testing would be preferable.

For younger children please let us know their natural sleeping patterns. It is important that your child is well rested and alert for the tests. This will help us to book a suitable appointment time.

Please make sure that your child does not wear any facial makeup, especially around the eyes as this can affect the accuracy of the tests.

To help your child feel at home and relaxed, please feel free to bring along a favourite DVD for us to play while we prepare for testing.

At some stages during testing your child may experience some feelings of dizziness. We are able to stop testing at any time to give your child a break, or stop completely if they feel they cannot continue.

Testing is carried out in the dark. If required, you will be able to stay in the testing room with your child throughout. We monitor your child at all times using cameras that work in the dark, and communicate through headphones and a microphone. For younger children and babies, we may need you to sit in the chair with your child on your lap.

The Tests

We use two test systems at GOSH: the Vestibular Diagnostic Chair and the Caloric system. Your child may have one or the other, or both.

Vestibular Chair

For these tests, you and/or your child will be strapped into a special seat that can turn round and tip up slightly. Your child will be connected to some monitors so that we can record his or her eye movements. Your child might wear some special camera goggles, or we may attach some small sticky pad electrodes to his or her head. In the dark, eye movements are controlled by the balance system. Looking at these movements enables us to assess your child's balance function.

In the first phase of tests the chair does not move. Your child will be asked to follow a red dot as it moves about on the screen in front of him or her. Next some black and white stripes will move across the screen to the right and left. The second

phase involves the chair moving from side to side, and spinning completely round to the left and to the right. Finally we may tilt the chair and turn it round to the left then right. All these movements happen quite slowly and we can stop testing at any time to give you or your child a break.

Caloric System

For this test, we will ask your child to lie on a couch and look up at some coloured lights on the ceiling. We will trickle some cold water into one ear for a few seconds, and then the other ear. Next, warm water will be trickled into your child's ears in the same way. The water will stimulate the balance system, causing your child's eyes to flicker. This is quite normal. Your child may feel dizzy like on a roundabout, but this will soon pass.

Consultation

Please allow two hours for this appointment, as the tests require preparation and explanation time. We will explain your child's test results once the testing and reporting is complete. If time does not allow, this will take place at your next appointment, or we may write to you with the results.

Appointment cancellations

Please let us know as soon as possible if you are unable to attend your scheduled appointment. Appointment slots are extremely valuable and this will enable us to offer the tests to another child. We will find an alternative time for you and your child to attend.

Notes

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Compiled by the staff from the GOSH Balance Testing Clinic
in collaboration with the Child and Family Information Group

If you have any questions, please call us on 020 7813 8430

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