



TILT TABLE TEST

WHAT IS A TILT-TABLE TEST?

If you often feel faint or lightheaded, your doctor may use a tilt-table test to find out why. During the test, you lie on a table that is slowly tilted upward. The test measures how your blood pressure and heart rate respond to the force of gravity. A nurse or technician keeps track of your blood pressure and your heart rate (pulse) to see how they change during the test.



Quick facts

Doctors use tilt-table tests to find out why people feel faint or lightheaded or completely pass out.

Tilt-table tests can be used to see if fainting is due to abnormal control of heart rate or blood pressure. A very slow heart rate (bradycardia) can cause fainting.

During the test, you lie on a special table that can have your head raised so that it is elevated to 60 to 80 degrees above the rest of your body while a nurse or doctor monitors your blood pressure and heart rate. You may have an IV inserted to give medicine or draw blood.

“It was a strange feeling. I felt like I was standing when they tilted the table, but my feet were not touching anything. It was fun – like being suspended in air.” Jim, age 72.

PREPARATION FOR TILT TABLE

- Your doctor will explain the procedure to you and offer you the opportunity to ask any questions that you might have about the procedure.
- You will be asked to sign a consent form that gives your permission to do the test. Read the form carefully and ask questions if something is not clear.
- Notify the technologist if you are allergic to or sensitive to medications or latex.
- Fasting may be required before the procedure. Your doctor will give you instructions as to how long you should withhold food and/or liquids.
- If you are pregnant or suspect that you may be pregnant, you should notify your health care provider.
- Notify your doctor of all medications (prescription and over-the-counter) and herbal supplements that you are taking.
- Notify your doctor if you have a pacemaker.
- You should make arrangements to have someone drive you home after the procedure, as you will most likely be told not to drive afterwards.
- Based on your medical condition, your doctor may request other specific preparation.



PROCEDURE

A tilt table procedure may be performed on an outpatient basis or as part of your stay in a hospital. Procedures may vary depending on your condition and your doctor's practices.

Generally, a tilt table procedure follows this process:

- You will be asked to remove any jewelry or other objects that may interfere with the procedure.
- You will be asked to remove clothing from the waist up and will be given a gown to wear.
- You will be asked to empty your bladder prior to the procedure.
- You will lie down on a special bed or table.
- An IV line may be started in your hand or arm prior to the procedure for injection of medication and to administer IV fluids, if needed.
- ECG electrodes will be placed on your chest and attached to an ECG machine with wire leads. A blood pressure cuff will be placed on your arm and will be attached to an automatic blood pressure monitoring machine.
- You will lie flat on the bed initially, then you will be raised to an almost standing angle while on the bed. Straps will be placed across your chest and legs to keep you from falling if you faint during the procedure.
- You will remain upright for up to 45 minutes to determine if symptoms such as dizziness, fainting, low heart rate, and/or a low blood pressure occur.
If no symptoms occur, you may be given a medication in your IV to speed up your heart rate. This will be given while you are lying flat again.
- After the medication is given (if needed), you will again be tilted upright and monitored for symptoms of dizziness, fainting, low heart rate, and/or a low blood pressure.
- Once adequate data has been obtained, you will be lowered to a flat position and allowed to rest for a while. Your heart rate and blood pressure will be monitored.
- When you are stable, the IV line, blood pressure cuff, and ECG electrodes will be removed.
- You will be allowed to dress and leave, unless your doctor instructs you differently.

YOUR RECOVERY

- You should be able to resume your normal diet and activities, unless your doctor instructs you differently.
- Generally, there is no special care following a tilt table procedure.
- Notify your doctor if you develop any signs or symptoms you had prior to the test (such as, dizziness or fainting).
- Your doctor may give you additional or alternate instructions after the procedure, depending on your situation.



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HEALTH MAINTENANCE

Tilt Table test will help determine the cause of your palpitations or dizzy/fainting episodes. Be sure you understand your follow-up plan and keep all appointments for exams and follow-up tests. Follow your instructions, don't hesitate to talk about your concerns, and immediately report any new symptoms.

As always, if you have any questions, be sure to call our office at 602-456-2342.