



Grand Rapids Cardiology

What to Expect

Tilt Table Test

What is a Tilt Table Test?

A tilt table test evaluates for neurocardiogenic syncope. Syncope is a condition when a person passes out, faints, or is unconscious for a short time. Neurocardiogenic means that the nervous system “neuro” and the heart system “cardio” are involved. The person’s blood pressure and heart rate drop suddenly and the brain does not receive enough blood. This results in the loss of consciousness.

When is a Tilt Table Test needed?

The most common reason for a tilt table test is when a person has passed out for reasons that are unclear. These spells can be dangerous if the person is injured when falling or crashes when driving a car.

Is the Tilt Table Test safe?

You may be given a medication during this test. Some possible side effects from the medication include fast heart rate, nausea, or slight nervousness. Other rare complications are shortness of breath, chest pain, abnormal heart rhythms, and very rarely, a heart attack or death. Health care professionals are with you and will watch closely for any problems.

If you are pregnant, suspect you may be, or are a nursing mother; discuss this with your doctor before the test.

How should I prepare for the test?

Do not eat, drink, or smoke for 2 hours before the test. You may have hard candy to suck or gum to chew. Check with your doctor about continuing to take any heart medicines. Your doctor may want you to stop taking some medicines a day or two before the test. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Family may come with you, but they will need to wait in the waiting room.

How is the test performed?

Several small sticky patches, called electrodes, will be placed on your chest. Wires to an electrocardiograph, or EKG, machine will connect these electrodes. A blood pressure cuff will be placed on your arm. A recording of your heart rhythm, heart rate, and blood pressure will be obtained throughout the test. An intravenous line (IV) will be placed into a vein in your arm. You will lie on a table; straps will be placed around your chest, waist, and above your knees to prevent you from falling.

The table will be placed in a standing position. If you notice any symptoms similar to when you passed out (such as yawning, nausea, warmth, or dizziness), please tell the staff.



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A medication may be given if none of your symptoms reoccur. After you receive the medication, if you notice any symptoms similar to when you passed out or chest pain, dizziness, or shortness of breath, tell the staff. After the medication is done, you will be placed flat. Your heart rate and blood pressure will continue to be checked for about 10 minutes.

The test will take about 1-2 hours.

How will I find out the test results?

A cardiologist will read the test and report the results to your doctor. Your doctor will inform you of the test results.

If you need to reschedule the test or have any questions regarding these instructions. please call our office at 616-717-5141.