

# Cardiovascular Services

*Electrophysiology*

*What you need to know about*

**Neurocardiogenic**

**Syncope**

**(Vasovagal Syncope)**

## **What is neurocardiogenic syncope ?**

One of the most common causes of fainting is called neurocardiogenic syncope. This condition is also called vasovagal syncope or the common faint. This condition is not really a disease but an abnormal reaction that results in a fall in blood pressure. The blood pressure may become so slow that a person may experience light headedness or fainting. The abnormal reaction that causes neurocardiogenic syncope may be brought on by pain, fear or anxiety, although frequently, this may occur without a trigger.

Because an episode of syncope may lead to serious injury, this test is important to diagnose the condition and, if necessary, treat it with medications and other regular daily practices, such as tilt training (see page 5) that will reduce your symptoms.

**The prognosis is usually quite good.**

## What is a head- up tilt test?

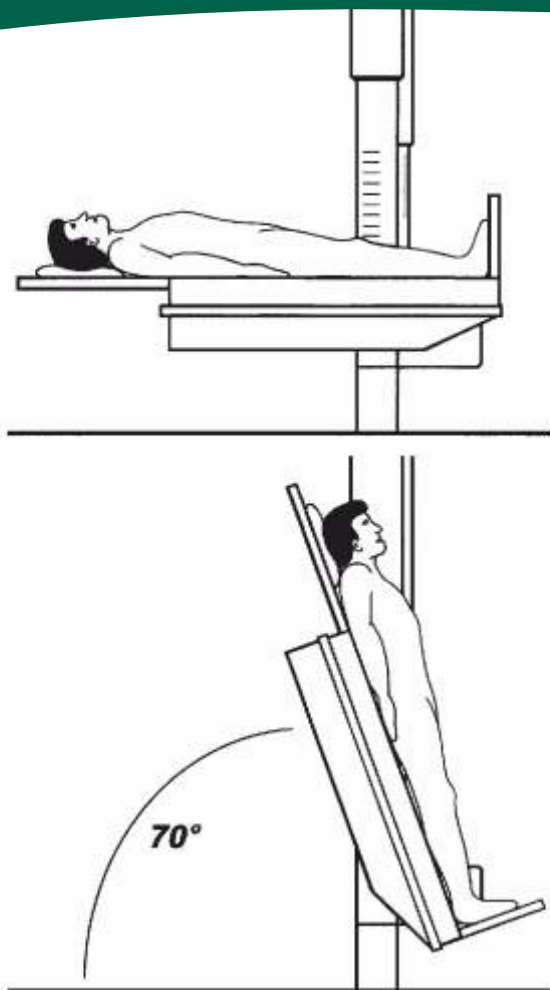
**Head up tilt testing is a way to safely diagnose neurocardiogenic syncope** by deliberately causing the symptoms of neurocardiogenic syncope in a special room called an electrophysiology lab (EP lab). You will be asked not to eat or drink anything for 6 hours before your test.

You will have a small tube inserted in your arm vein (intravenous, IV) for possible medications.

## When you have your tilt test

You lie on a table that slowly tilts you to a 70 degree angle (see page 3) Your heart rate and blood pressure may be monitored with a small 2-inch catheter in the artery in the wrist or groin.

After 15 to 20 minutes, you are returned to a lying position (or sooner if symptoms occur).



### Head-up tilt test

If the test is positive (a blood pressure drop and similar symptoms as before), you will be given medications in an IV to reduce your symptoms, and the test is repeated as before.

If the first test is negative (no blood pressure drop or symptoms), you will be given medication in an IV to increase your heart rate and the test is repeated as before.

## ***Treatment and tilt training:***

### ***What you can do***

Once your doctor makes a diagnosis of neurocardiogenic syncope, treatment with medications may or may not be recommended (depending on how often and how severe your episodes of dizziness or fainting have been).

You may do many things to prevent or lessen your symptoms of neurocardiogenic syncope:

- Stand or sit up slowly.
- Avoid sitting or standing for a long time without moving or exercising your leg muscle.
- Drink plenty of fluids, especially juices and drinks that have sodium (salt) and electrolytes.
- Increase the amount of salt in your diet, but only if you do not have a history of heart failure or high blood pressure.
- Limit your intake of alcohol.
- Stay away from excessive heat as much as possible.  
Get regular exercise.
- Begin regular tilt training if recommended by your doctor (see next page).

**Bring this diary to your next office appointment.**

**To avoid injury** when you start your tilt training, be sure to choose a place that is comfortable and safe if you should faint or fall. Have a family member or friend present during each session to help you if you needed. Sit or lay down immediately if you experience dizziness.

Stand against a wall with your feet together (about 1 feet away from the wall).

Do this exercise every day. Begin with 10 minutes and gradually increase the length of time.

- Date 1-2**    10 minutes
- Date 3-4**    20 minutes (or two 10-minute sessions)
- Date 5-6**    30 minutes (or two 15-minute sessions)
- Date 7**        40 minutes (or two 20-minute sessions)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Tilt Training</b>	<b>Symptoms (if any)</b>
_____	___ minutes	_____
_____	___ minutes	_____
_____	___ minutes	_____
_____	___ minutes	_____
_____	___ minutes	_____
_____	___ minutes	_____
_____	___ minutes	_____



## Call your doctor if

**Symptoms develop** after you start taking any new medications.

**Symptoms become worse** for longer than a week or you pass out.

**You have any questions** about your condition, medications or other concerns.

Remember to make and keep your regular appointments

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