

THE NEUROLOGICAL “HISTORY” AND EXAMINATION

During a neurological assessment time is taken to ascertain the nature of symptoms that are being experienced. Their duration and progression – and any perceived cause will be established. Further information about related and medically relevant conditions will be obtained.

You will be asked about your general health, including any previous operations and medication you have taken regularly. *Please bring an up to date list of your medications. Emailing this in advance can be very useful.*

You may also be asked about your occupation and leisure pursuits – and what they involve (for example, meetings, face-to-face client work, use of VDUs, sports etc). This is important so that Dr Heaney can fully understand the impact of the symptoms and condition you are experiencing.

A neurological examination is likely to be performed. This is not intrusive or painful, but involves tests of movement, sensation, balance and on occasion cognition. You should wear clothes than can easily be moved – particularly over the lower limbs, as examination of the legs and feet is often required.

Will I have a scan or other investigations?

Following assessment, it may be necessary to perform additional investigations such as MR scanning, blood sampling, neurophysiological assessment or formal memory and cognitive testing. It is usually possible to perform these investigations “on the day” but for more complex investigation it is likely to be necessary to return to the hospital. Results can take up to 1 week to be processed.

I’ve had investigations before. Should I bring them with me?

These will be important to review. Even if you have come for a “second opinion”, previous medical documents will be important as part of the neurological formulation. Occasionally, important tests may need to be repeated.

Can I bring someone with me?

It can be very useful to have a friend or relative present – particularly if your condition has caused you to lose consciousness or awareness. In this case, a written account from a witness is also helpful (even if you do not know them well, most people are willing to help in this way e.g. with an email).

It is generally not recommended to have more than one person with you in the clinic rooms – as it can be distracting to you and Dr Heaney – but of course specific requirements can be discussed on the day.