

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or

whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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Tests of the brain function

Evoked Potential (EP)

A patient's guide



Introduction

In the clinical neurophysiology department we do various tests which record the electrical activity of the brain and nervous system. These tests are usually done at the request of a doctor to assist them in the diagnosis of your problem.

What is an evoked potentials (EPs) test?

These tests record the brain's responses to particular stimuli. They are painless and there are no after effects. They take about an hour at most for adults but may take longer for babies.

- The visual EPs (VEP) involve a person looking at a screen with either a checkerboard pattern (or sometimes a flashing light) and are used to test the speed and shape of responses in the nerves from the eyes.
- If you wear glasses please bring them in for this test.
- The auditory EPs involve a person resting with a pair of earphones on. A rapid clicking noise produces tiny signals in the nerve from the ear.
- The somato-sensory EPs (SSEP) involve applying small pulses to the wrist (just enough to make the thumb twitch slightly). You can feel it but it does not hurt. The signals travelling along the nerves of the arm to the brain are measured by contacts on the collarbone, neck and scalp.

This test can also be performed on the legs.

Preparation for EP tests

- Please ensure your hair is clean with no oil, wax, cream or spray used on the head.
- You can take medicines, and eat and drink as normal. Please bring a list of the medicine you take when you come for the test.
- It is a good idea for a child to bring along a favourite toy and a drink.

- Please wear loose open-necked clothing for this test.

Results

All signals for these tests are recorded and stored on a computer. They are later analysed by a consultant and the results sent to the doctor who requested the test, usually within 7-10 days.

Transport

If you require hospital transport, please contact the transport department between 4 weeks and 2 days before your appointment on **0333 240 4909** to find out if you can apply for this service.

Understanding English

If you would like an interpreter to be with you for the test, you must contact the department at least ten working days before your test. This is so that we can book an interpreter for you.

Further information

If you have any questions please telephone clinical neurophysiology on:

020 7288 5317 / 020 7288 5379.

Monday to Friday, 9am - 4pm.