

Somatosensory Evoked Potentials (SSEPs)

Information for Patients

This information is written to provide information for patients attending for a Somatosensory Evoked Potentials (SSEP) test.

Why have I been referred for this test?

You have been referred to the department by your consultant or GP. People are referred for Somatosensory Evoked Potentials (SSEPs) for a variety of reasons but most commonly they are used in the investigation of people who complain of weakness or strange sensations in their arms or legs.

You do not have to be experiencing your symptoms at the time of the test.

What is a SSEP and what does it involve?

A SSEP is a diagnostic test that records the function of the nerve pathway between a limb and the brain by stimulating either a hand or foot depending on the symptoms.

A Clinical Physiologist will perform the test- although staff in training might be present during the investigation. The Clinical Physiologist will explain each part of the test to you and answer any questions you might have.

Whilst sitting in a chair, small discs will then be applied to your head, using a small amount of sticky paste. This paste is easily removed once the test is completed but you may wish to wash your hair again later.

Small stickers will then be placed on your wrist and/or ankle, depending on your symptoms. These stickers are easily removed at the end of the test.

What will I feel during the test?

To test the nerve pathway in the hand/foot, the test will involve a small electrical pulse being applied to either your wrist or foot. This will make your finger or toe twitch for a short while, but is not painful.

What preparation is needed?

Please ensure that your hair is clean and free from hair products.

If you are on treatment, please take your medication as normal and at the usual time.

Please ensure that you are wearing loose-fitting clothing.

How long will the test last?

The test takes between 30-60 minutes.

What are the side effects of the test?

There are no after effects associated with this test and after the investigation you will be able to go home or back to work.

When will I receive the results?

You will not receive the results on the day of the test. A full report will be sent to the consultant/GP who referred you for the test.

Additional information

Occasionally some people will find the test difficult to tolerate. If you feel that you will struggle with any aspect of the test, please telephone the department. We are happy to accommodate any special arrangements.

Keeping your appointment

If you cannot keep your appointment, or have been given one that is unsuitable, please change it by phoning the number on your appointment letter. Your call will give someone else the chance to be seen and will help us keep waiting times to a minimum.

Public transport and travel Information

Bus details available from:

Lothian Buses on **0131 555 6363** or www.lothianbuses.co.uk

Traveline Scotland on **08712002233** or www.travelinescotland.com

Train details available from:

National Rail Enquiries on **03457 484 950** or www.nationalrail.co.uk

Patient Transport

Patient Transport will only be made available if you have a medical/clinical need.

Telephone **0300 123 1236** (calls charged at local rate) up to 28 days in advance to book, making sure you have your CHI Number available. Hard of hearing or speech impaired?

A text relay service is available if you are hard of hearing or speech impaired. They can be contacted on: **18001-0300 123 1236**(calls charged at local rate).

To cancel patient transport, telephone 0800 389 1333 (Freephone 24 hr answer service).

Interpretation and translation

Your GP will inform us of any interpreting requirements you have before you come to hospital and we will provide an appropriate interpreter. If you are having this procedure as an existing in patient, staff will arrange interpreting support for you in advance of this procedure. This leaflet may be made available in a larger print, Braille or your community language.

Contact information

Clinical Neurophysiology Department

Out Patients' Department (OPD)15

Telephone: **0131 312 1505 / 0131 312 1509**