

Somatosensory Evoked Potentials (SSEPs)

Information for Parents and Carers



This leaflet will provide you with information about attending for your child's Somatosensory Evoked Potentials (SSEP) test.

Why has my child been referred for this test?

Your child has been referred to the department by their consultant or GP. Children are referred for Somatosensory evoked potentials (SSEPs) for a variety of reasons but most commonly they are used in the investigation of children who complain of weakness or strange sensations in their arms or legs.

Your child does not have to be experiencing their 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. They will explain the procedure to you and your child and take any relevant medical history. Please feel free to ask any questions that you have about the test.

During the test, your child will sit in a chair and the clinical physiologist will stick small discs to your child's head using a special glue or sticky paste. This paste is easy to remove once the test is completed but you may want to wash their hair when you get home.

The clinical physiologist will also place small stickers on your child's wrist and/or ankle, depending on your child's symptoms. These stickers are easily removed at the end of the test.

What will my child 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 child's wrist or foot. This will make their muscle twitch for a short while, but is not painful.

What preparation is needed?

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

If your child is on treatment, they should take their medication as normal and at the usual time.

Please ensure your child is 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 your child will be able to go home or to school.

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 your child for the test.

Additional Information

Occasionally some children will find the test difficult to tolerate. If you feel that your child 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** 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 (this appears on your appointment letter). Hard of hearing or speech impaired? Use text relay: **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

Department of Clinical Neurophysiology (OPD 16)
Royal Hospital for Children and Young People
Edinburgh

Telephone: **0131 312 1506**