

# Recording nerve and brain activity with a somatosensory evoked potential (SSEP) (adults)

## Clinical Neurophysiology

Information for Patients

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Your consultant has asked us to do a somatosensory evoked potential (SSEP). This sheet tells you what an SSEP is and what you need to know before you come for the appointment.

### What is an SSEP?

An evoked potential (EP) is a recording of the electrical activity from sensory nerve pathways to the brain.

A somatosensory evoked potential (SSEP) records the brain's electrical response to sensory stimulation from the nerves in your arms or legs.

A trained professional in healthcare science (physiologist) will carry out the EP.

### What do I need to do before the SSEP?

- Please bring a list of current medication and take these as normal
- You may eat and drink as normal
- Please do not apply any body lotions, oils or hand creams before the appointment
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing

**Important:** If you have a pacemaker or internal defibrillator fitted please tell the physiologist on the day.

### How long does the SSEP last?

Preparation and recording will take up to 2 hours

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or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice

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## What will happen during the SSEP?

- The physiologist will measure your head and make some small marks on the scalp with a wax type crayon.
- They will then prepare the skin at these marks with a gritty gel.
- They will attach the electrodes to the scalp with a sticky paste. The recording electrodes are small metal discs. Recording electrodes will also be placed in positions on your arms and legs.
- The physiologist will stay in the room during the EP.
- They will ask questions about your medical history.
- Electrical stimulation is applied to the wrist and/or ankle. You will feel a tingling, pulsing sensation and your fingers and toes may twitch. If anything feels too uncomfortable please let the physiologist know
- Responses from your nerves and brain will be recorded on the computer.
- An SSEP is **not harmful** and there are no after-effects.

At the end of the SSEP the electrodes will be removed. Any remaining sticky paste will be removed when you next wash the hair. This will **not** hurt.

## When will I get the results?

You will not get the results on the day of the SSEP. Your consultant will be sent a report which they will then discuss with you.

## Anything else I need to know?

Please let us know if you will be coming by ambulance. We may need to rearrange the appointment.

## Contact details

Call the Neurophysiology Department on **0116 258 5621** if you need more information.

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