



Manchester Royal Infirmary

Somatosensory Evoked Potential (SEP)

Neurophysiology Department
(0161) 276 4564



What Is An SEP?

- SEP stands for Somatosensory Evoked Potential.
- An SEP is a way of testing the nerve pathway that runs between your limbs (your arms and legs) and your brain.
- It is a simple test that is performed on people of all ages and is very safe.

Why Do I Need An SEP?

People are referred for SEPs for a variety of reasons. Most often an SEP is used in the investigation of people who complain of weakness or altered sensations feelings in their arms or legs.

The SEP Test

Before the SEP

No special preparation is needed before the SEP; you should take any medication as prescribed and eat and drink as normal. It is helpful however, if you can come with clean hair that is free from styling products.

During the SEP

- The SEP will be performed by a Clinical Physiologist and will take around 45 minutes. During the test you will be sitting in a comfortable chair in a quiet room.
- Firstly, you will be asked some questions about your medical history (mainly about your symptoms and medication) and the test will be explained fully. You will also have chance to ask any questions that you have.
- Next, your head will be measured and several small metal disks called electrodes (see picture) will be placed at specific points on your head, neck and shoulders using a special type of paste. This process will take around 10 minutes.
- Once the electrodes have been applied, you will be asked to relax and sit comfortably in a reclining chair.



During the SEP (continued)

- The SEP can be used to test the arms or the legs depending on where your symptoms are.
 - To test the arms a small electric pulse will be used to stimulate the nerve at your wrist and make your thumb twitch. The pulse is very low in strength and though you will be able to feel it, most people do not find it too uncomfortable.
 - To test the legs the process is very similar, except the pulse is applied close to the ankle and makes the toes twitch. Again, though they can be felt the pulses are usually not too uncomfortable.
- At the end of the SEP all of the electrodes will be removed and your head cleaned. Because of the paste used your hair may feel a little sticky, but it will come clean when it is washed properly.

After the SEP

There are no side effects or after effects from the SEP and you can go home and carry on with school or work as usual.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will I get the results straight away?

No. It takes some time to review your SEP and this is done by a Consultant Neurophysiologist. A report of the findings will be written and sent to the doctor who referred you. This doctor will then contact you with a follow up appointment and discuss the results with you there.

Will I feel anything?

You will feel the pulses used to stimulate the nerves, and though you may feel some slight discomfort, it will only last for a few seconds, and on the whole, most people do not find the tests too uncomfortable.

Do I have to cut my hair?

No. SEPs can be done on people with long hair or short hair and there is no need to cut your hair beforehand. You should, however, have clean hair on the day of the test and try not to use styling products.

Why do I have to come to Manchester Royal Infirmary for the test?

SEP testing is not available at all hospitals, therefore though you may have originally seen a doctor at another hospital you have been referred to Manchester Royal Infirmary for this test. The results will be sent back to the doctor that originally referred you.

Further Information About SEPs

The department is open Monday to Friday between 8.00am and 5.00pm. If you require further information about SEPs or neurophysiology then feel free to call us on **(0161) 276 4386** or **(0161) 276 4564**. Alternatively you could consult:

Hospital website: www.cmft.nhs.uk

NHS direct website: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Contact Details

Neurophysiology Department
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Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9WL

Tel: (0161) 276 4564

Fax: (0161) 276 6054

Getting To The Neurophysiology Department

- The Neurophysiology Department is located on the **Ground Floor** in the Manchester Royal Infirmary.
- The closest entrance to the department is **MRI Entrance 2** located on the hospital Boulevard.
- There are two multi-storey car parks at the hospital (Hathersage Road and Grafton Street). You should allow 10 – 15 minutes to get from the car parks to the Neurophysiology department.
- Parking for patients who require access to Drop-off areas (30 minutes maximum) is also available. These areas are barrier controlled and accessed from the Hathersage Road entrance, which is signed “Access for Drop-off and Blue Badge Holders only”.
- If you require ambulance transport to the hospital then you should arrange this with your GP as soon as you know your appointment date.

Zero Tolerance Policy

We are committed to the well-being and safety of our patients and of our staff. Please treat other patients and staff with the courtesy and respect that you expect to receive. Verbal abuse, harassment and physical violence are unacceptable and will lead to prosecutions.

Smoking

Smoking is only permitted within the external designated smoking areas. You may be putting others at risk if you smoke in non-designated areas. The Manchester Stop Smoking Service can be contacted on Tel: (0161) 205 5998 (www.stopsmokingmanchester.co.uk).

Suggestions, Concerns and Complaints

If you wish to make a comment, have a concern or want to complain, it is best in the first instance to speak to the manager of the ward or department involved.

The Trust has a Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). Who can be contacted on (0161) 276 8686 and via e-mail: pals@cmft.nhs.uk. They will help you if you have a concern, want advice, or wish to make a comment or complaint.

Information leaflets about the service are readily available throughout the Trust. Please ask any member of staff for a copy.

No Smoking Policy

Please protect our patients, visitors and staff by adhering to our no smoking policy. Smoking is not permitted in any of our hospital buildings or grounds, except in the dedicated smoking shelters in the grounds of our Central Manchester site.

For advice and support on how to give up smoking, go to <http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree>.

Translation and Interpretation Service

It is our policy that family, relatives or friends cannot interpret for patients. Should you require an interpreter ask a member of staff to arrange it for you.

تتص سیاستنا علی عدم السماح لافراد عائلة المرضى او اقاربهم او اصدقائهم بالترجمة لهم. اذا احتجت الى مترجم فيرجى ان تطلب ذلك من احد العاملين ليرتب لك ذلك.

ہماری یہ پالیسی ہے کہ خاندان ، رشتہ دار اور دوست مریضوں کے لئے ترجمہ نہیں کرسکتے۔ اگر آپ کو مترجم کی ضرورت ہے تو عملے کے کسی رکن سے کہیں کہ وہ آپ کے لئے اس کا بندوبست کر دے۔

ইহা আমাদের নীতি যে, একজন রোগীর জন্য তার পরিবারের সদস্য, আত্মীয় বা কোন বন্ধু অনুবাদক হতে পারবেন না। আপনার একজন অনুবাদকের প্রয়োজন হলে তা একজন কর্মচারীকে জানান অনুবাদকের ব্যবস্থা করার জন্য।

Nasze zasady nie pozwalają na korzystanie z pomocy członków rodzin pacjentów, ich przyjaciół lub ich krewnych jako tłumaczy. Jeśli potrzebują Państwo tłumacza, prosimy o kontakt z członkiem personelu, który zorganizuje go dla Państwa.

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我们的方针是，家属，亲戚和朋友不能为病人做口译。如果您需要口译员，请叫员工给您安排。



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