

Neurophysiology department

Your visual evoked potential (VEP) test

Information for patients, relatives and carers

This leaflet explains what a visual evoked potential (VEP) test is and how to prepare for it. We hope it answers any questions that you or those who care for you may have. This leaflet does not replace the discussion between you and your care team but aims to help you understand more about what is discussed. If there is anything that you do not understand, please ask your care team.

What is a visual evoked potential (VEP) test?

A VEP test assesses the optic nerve pathways function which is located between the eye and the brain. It is a painless test recommended by your consultant if they have concerns about how your nerves are working or if you have had any changes in your vision.

Preparing for the test

- If you wear glasses please bring them with you; contact lenses cannot be worn for some of the testing so you will need your glasses
- Please tell us about any eye conditions you may have on the day of the test
- Continue to take your medication as normal
- Please eat and drink as normal
- Bring a list of your current medication with you to the appointment
- Please wash your hair before the test and do not use any hair products such as gel or hairspray
- Please remove any hair extensions/weave/wig before the test
- You may wish to bring a hair brush or comb with you to tidy your hair after the test

Please arrive on time for your appointment. If you are running late, please call us on the appropriate number listed on page 3, otherwise we may have to cancel or reschedule your test.

During the test

- When you arrive at your appointment you will be called in by the clinical physiologist who will explain the test, answer any questions you have and ask you to sign a consent form
- We will discuss your medical history and ask to see the list of your current medication
- We will ask you to read an eye chart to assess your sight with and without glasses
- We will measure and mark your head using a crayon and rub it off using an abrasive gel which can feel like a small scratch
- A few electrodes (small metal discs) will be attached using a conducting paste. The paste can leave your hair feeling sticky but this will come off very easily when you wash your hair
- We will turn down the lights in the room and cover one eye at a time - the test will examine both eyes separately
- We will ask you to concentrate on the centre of a screen, which will display a reversing checkboard, or you may be asked to look at flashing lights
- The VEP test lasts between 30 minutes and one hour
- Further tests may be needed for some patients such as an electroretinogram (ERG), where we look at the function of the retina, a layer in the back of your eye that is sensitive to light. For this test, two more electrodes are used on each side
- ERG electrodes are fine fibre-like soft hair, which are completely safe to use. This soft hair-like electrode rests on the surface of your eye. This can feel as if you have an eyelash in your eye and may take a few seconds to get used to but some people may not feel it
- We will ask you to watch the same screen with both eyes. This extra testing will take about 30 minutes
- Very occasionally, a flash VEP study may be performed. This might include asking you to look towards a flashing light (like a camera flash), with each eye tested for a few minutes at a time
- When the test is completed, the physiologist will remove the electrodes and gently clean the area. You can remove any excess paste by shampooing your hair at home
- The results will be analysed and a report sent to your referring consultant. This usually takes up to two weeks

Risk or complications following the test

There are no known side effects or risks involved in having a VEP.

Contact details

If you cannot make your test or have any questions or concerns about your appointment please contact the relevant neurophysiology department:

- St Marys Hospital: **020 3312 6628**
- Charing Cross Hospital: **020 3311 1329 / 7515**

We are open Monday–Friday, 09.00–17.00.

How do I comment on my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross Hospital), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's Hospital). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk