

# Having a Visual Evoked Potential (VEP) test

This information sheet has been given to you to help answer some of the questions you may have about having a Visual Evoked Potential (VEP) test. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

As the test takes up to an hour, it is essential that you arrive in time for your appointment. If you arrive late, your appointment will have to be rescheduled.

## What is a VEP?

A VEP is a diagnostic test used to check the optic nerve pathway which runs from your eyes to your brain.

## Why should I have a VEP?

A doctor may recommend that you go for a VEP test when you have had changes in your vision that can be due to problems along the optic nerve pathway.

## What are the benefits of a VEP?

A VEP can provide valuable information that can help your doctor reach a diagnosis and help in the management of your medical condition. **The tests are not painful.**

## Are there any risks associated with a VEP?

There are no known risks or side-effects of having a VEP.

## Are there any alternatives?

There are no alternative tests.

## Will I feel any pain or discomfort?

You will feel your skin being gently rubbed when a few discs are pressed onto your head, but the test should be pain-free.

## **What do I need to do to prepare for the VEP?**

- Please ensure your hair is clean and avoid using hair gel, oil or other hair products.
- You may eat and drink as normal prior to the test.
- Take any medication(s) as normal. Please bring a list of your medication(s) with you.
- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, please bring them with you.

## **Giving my consent (permission)**

We want to involve you in decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This states that you agree to have the test and you understand what it involves.

If you would like more information about our consent process, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

## **What does the test involve?**

The test takes about 30 minutes to one hour in total.

A clinical physiologist will carry out the test. He/she will explain the procedure to you and take any relevant medical history. Please feel free to ask any questions you have about the test to be performed.

First you will be asked to read an eye chart to check your eyesight. Then the physiologist will start by marking measurements on your head, using a soft crayon. After gently rubbing the marks, the physiologist will apply seven small discs called electrodes onto your head with some sticky paste.

The paste will be easily removed after the test although you may wish to wash your hair again later when you get home.

You will be sat comfortably in a chair for the test. One eye will be covered with an eye patch and the lights will be dimmed.

You will then be asked to focus intently on the centre of a television screen with a moving pattern of black and white squares on it, rather like a chessboard. The clinical physiologist will take recordings on the machine as you do this. Each eye will be tested separately for a few minutes at a time. You will be asked to stay still and relaxed during the test.

Further tests may be performed using a flashing light; you may be asked to look towards a flashing light (like a camera flash), with each eye tested separately for a few minutes at a time.

## **What happens after the test?**

The discs are removed using warm water and you will be able to return home or to work/school. You may wish to wash your hair when you return home as it may feel a little sticky.

## **When will I get the results?**

The results of the test will need to be analysed and a full report will be sent to the doctor who asked for the test. This usually takes one to two weeks.

## **Will I have a follow-up appointment?**

The doctor who referred you for the test will usually contact you with a follow up appointment so you can receive your results.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the procedure, please contact the Neurophysiology Department on 020 7188 3954 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets)

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

**e:** 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

**t:** 111

### NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

**w:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

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