

Information for patients

VEMP Testing

Vestibular evoked
myogenic potentials

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Why might I need an appointment for VEMP testing?

You have been referred for VEMP testing to investigate the cause of your dizziness, vertigo or imbalance. VEMP is one of the tests we sometimes do for vestibular (balance) function testing. This leaflet explains what the test will involve and what you need to do before attending your appointment. The appointment can last up to 90 minutes, please organise travel arrangements accordingly. NB: This appointment may be at our Southmead department. (A separate leaflet is also available for vestibular function testing).

Important information – please read carefully

If you have any special communication requirements, please inform us as soon as possible. We are happy to arrange interpretation services.

Your ears need to be completely free of wax. Your own GP surgery can usually check your ears and remove any excessive wax. Please arrange this with your GP surgery at least 2 weeks before the appointment.

On the day of your appointment

Please wear comfortable, loose clothing. Do not wear ear jewellery (such as ear piercing or studs) which might interfere with our equipment. We sometimes cannot do the test if we find that you have an ear infection or your ear canal is inflamed.

Please be aware that failure to comply with any of the above requirements, or if you are late for your appointment, this may mean re-arranging your appointment.

Travel

You may bring someone with you to the appointment if you like. Patients usually find they feel absolutely fine to drive immediately after the test.

What is involved in VEMP testing?

This stands for 'vestibular evoked myogenic potentials'. Sometimes, we do this test as part of a more comprehensive series of tests of balance. If this is the case, the appointment may take significantly longer.

We will begin with asking you some questions about your dizziness and balance, and any other ear symptoms you may have. Before the test, we will examine your ears and do a very quick test which looks at how your ear drum and middle ear respond. This is completely painless.

We prepare by gently rubbing the skin with some cool paste on 4 small areas (forehead, near the bottom of the throat, and each side of the neck). Small stickers are placed on these areas and connected to cables, which pick up some responses from your hearing and balance nerves via the skin. Little foam pads sit inside the ear, and we play some 'clicking' sounds. Some of these may be a little loud, but if any of these become uncomfortable please tell us straight away and we will stop.

During the test, all you have to do is sit back and relax. We will ask you to turn your head and neck to one side or the other whilst we play the sounds. This will only be for a couple of minutes each time.

How will I feel?

This test is tolerated very well, and is unlikely to trigger any adverse symptoms.

When will I know my results?

When the test has finished, sometimes the clinician may be able to discuss the results. Sometimes, we need to look at the results in more detail and analyse these further.

A full report will be sent to your medical consultant, and a copy will be sent to your GP. Please let us know if you would like a copy.

What if I don't want to do the test?

Verbal consent must be given by you before we perform any tests. If you do not feel comfortable with any procedure the clinician is describing please let them know straight away.

What if I can't find the answer to my question in this leaflet?

If you have questions not answered by this leaflet please don't hesitate to contact us using the details at the top of this form.

We welcome any comments or feedback about your appointment and you can respond on this online survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/R7HZJKH> as this helps us make changes to support patient care. This document has been reviewed and agreed by the patient participation hearing group.

If you feel this appointment is not needed please let us know.