

# Having an Evoked Potentials Test

Abbotsford Regional Hospital

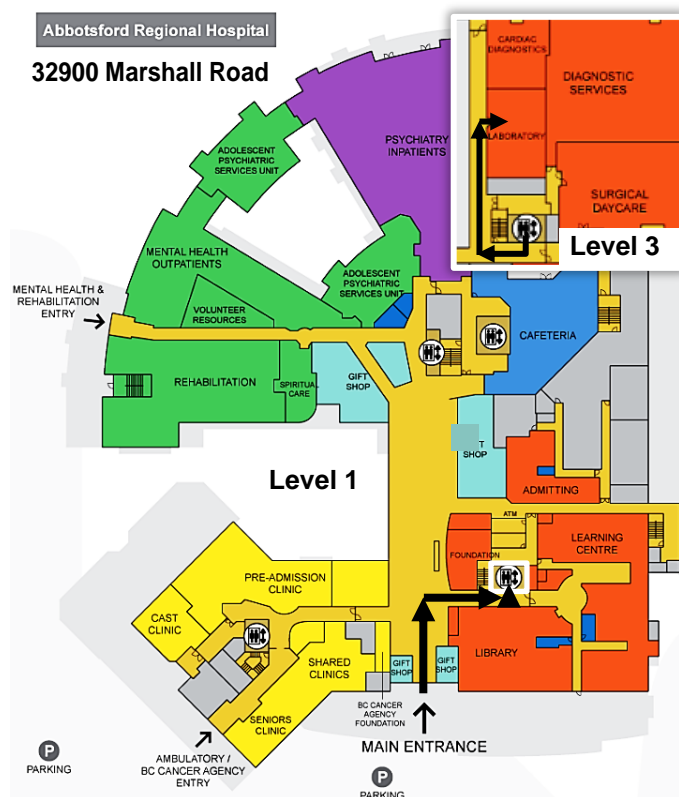
I am having this type of evoked potentials test:

☐ ABR ☐ VEP ☐ SSEP

My appointment date: \_\_\_\_\_

My appointment time: \_\_\_\_\_

- \* The doctor who ordered this test contacts you with the date and time.
- \*\* Please arrive 20 minutes early so you can find parking and register in Admitting. Report to the Neurodiagnostic Department in Diagnostic Services, Level 3 Fraser Wing. Check in at the 3<sup>rd</sup> desk. Do not take a number.



If you need to reschedule or cancel, please call us as soon as possible.

604-851-4853

## What is an evoked potentials test?

This is a test that measures the time it takes for electrical signals to travel along nerves to the brain. There are 3 types of evoked potentials tests (or EP tests). Depending on what your doctor wants to check, you could have one or more of these done.

## What are the 3 types of EP tests?

### Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR)

This records how long it takes for sound to travel from the ear to the brain. This helps see if your brain is getting messages from the nerves in your ears. It does not tell us how well you hear.

### Visual Evoked Potential (VEP)

This records how long it takes your brain to process what you are seeing. This helps see if your brain is getting messages from your eyes.

### SomatoSensory Evoked Potential (SSEP)

This records how long it takes your brain to process touch or another sensation in an arm or leg. This helps see if your brain is getting messages from the nerves in your arms or legs.

## How long will the test take?

Each type of EP test takes up to one hour. If you are having all 3 done, it can take up to 2 hours.

## How is the test done?

- We ask you about your medical history, focusing on the reasons for the EP test. This includes reviewing the list of the medications you are taking.
- We measure your head and mark different spots on your scalp with a washable crayon.
- We clean each spot with a special gel.
- We attach 4 to 7 small discs to your scalp with water-soluble paste. These are called electrodes.
- We connect the electrodes by wires to a computer. The computer records your brain's electrical activity.
- For an ABR, you lie on a bed with headphones on and you listen to a loud clicking sound in one ear and a "whooshing" sound in the other ear.
- For a VEP, you sit in front of a TV screen with an eye patch over one eye. We ask you to focus the other eye on a dot in the middle of the screen while a black and white checkerboard pattern flashes on the screen. We then switch the patch to the other eye.
- For the SSEP, you lie on a bed and relax with your eyes closed. We attach small electrodes to areas on your arms, legs, or both. We send a mild electrical pulse that is picked up by the electrodes. Your muscle will twitch. You will feel a tingling sensation.
- Once completed, we remove all the electrodes and wash off the paste and crayon as best we can.

## How do I prepare for the test?

- Wash your hair the day of the test. Make sure your hair is totally dry. Do not put anything in your hair like spray or gel. It can affect the test.
- Take medicines as you normally would.
- Bring a list of all the medicines you are currently taking.
- Wear loose fitting clothing that makes it easy for us to expose your neck area. Wear a top with short sleeves.
- If you wear glasses, contacts, or hearing aides, bring them with you for the test.
- You might want to bring a hat, scarf, or comb because of the paste we need to put on your scalp.
- If you do not speak or understand English well enough to have medical conversations, **please call us as soon as possible**. We can arrange for a medical interpreter. You can bring someone with you to help you communicate with us.

## How will I know the results?

We send a report to the doctor who ordered the test and your family doctor after our nerve specialist doctor (our neurologists) looks at the recordings. The technologist doing the test cannot tell you anything about what is seen on the recordings.

## What if I have questions?

Please call us at 604-851-4853 if you have questions about:

- this test
- your appointment date or time