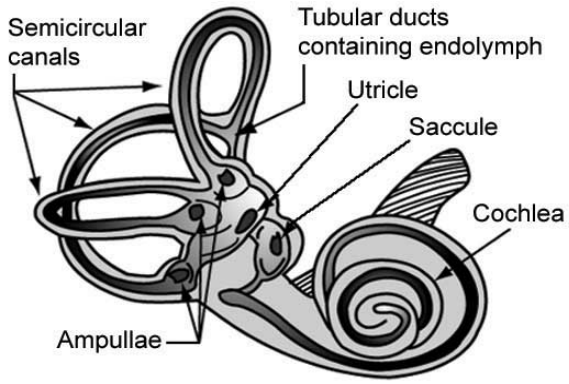
Vestibular-evoked Myogenic Potential (VEMP) test

This leaflet is for patients with symptoms of dizziness who are about to undergo VEMP testing. It is one of the tests we can use to evaluate the function of the ears and their contribution to your balance. The tests we choose to evaluate your dizziness will depend on your individual symptoms. This leaflet covers what you can expect during the test.

What is the purpose of the VEMP test?

Some types of dizziness and balance problems can originate in the inner ear or the structures (nerves) attached to the ear, called the 'vestibular system'. Each of our tests explores this system in a different way. The inner ear has two compartments that sense gravity and acceleration. They are called the otoliths. The VEMP measures the function of these compartments. There are two versions of the VEMP test, called the ocular VEMP (oVEMP) and the cervical VEMP (cVEMP). Your clinician may use either test. It may not tell us the exact cause of your dizziness but the test can help locate if your dizziness is coming from these structures. This can help narrow down the possible causes for your symptoms.



What you can expect during the test

These information aims to explain the procedure to help reduce the time it takes to perform and to answer more common questions, in advance of your appointment.

- The test measures your otolith function in response to a loud clicking sound, using some wires that we attach to your skin with sticky pads. The test will be conducted while you are seated.
- **You should not wear make-up** as it can interfere with how well these sticky pads connect with your body and may prevent us from being able to measure the response accurately. We will prepare your skin by using a grainy paste on it beforehand.

- We may repeat the test two or more times on each ear (a ‘run’) and each run will last around 40 seconds. After conducting the test with the sound we may conduct the test without sound, to compare the measurements.
- oVEMP only – for the oVEMP the sticky pads will be placed on your forehead and under your eyes (*see below left*). During each test run, you will be asked to look up at the ceiling.
- cVEMP only – for the cVEMP the sticky pads will be placed on your forehead and on a muscle in your neck (*see below right*). During each test run, you will be asked to look over your shoulder.
- Each test will typically take 10 – 20 minutes.



oVEMPs



cVEMPs

What you may experience

The sound used to conduct the test is loud but short-lived. It is unusual to have any symptoms with this test.

It is less typical for you to experience neck discomfort (cVEMPs only). If this occurs, please let us know, as this may require us to stop the test.

Are there precautions or potential risks for performing the VEMP test?

There are few restrictions for performing the VEMP test. It may not be suitable to perform cVEMPs in some patients where there are restrictions to neck or blood circulation in the neck. If you have any concerns, you should raise these with your clinician before your appointment or before undertaking the test.

In addition, it may not be suitable to perform VEMPs in some patients with tinnitus or those with a sensitivity to loud sounds. It is uncommon but in patients with tinnitus there is a risk that their tinnitus can be made worse (particularly if your tinnitus is made worse by loud

sounds). Again, if you have any concerns about this, you should raise these with your clinician before your appointment and before undertaking the test.

Can I decline to have the VEMP procedure performed?

If you do not wish to go ahead with the test or have any questions, contact your clinician to discuss them before you attend the clinic, so we are able to use the time effectively in clinic to perform testing on other patients.

Contacting us

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To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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