

# Autonomic Function and Small Fibre Neuropathy Tests

An information guide



# Autonomic Function and Small Fibre Neuropathy Tests

## What is Small Fibre Neuropathy?

Small fibre neuropathy is a type of peripheral neuropathy that occurs from damage to the small fibres of the peripheral nervous system and is characterised by severe pain attacks that typically begin in the feet or hands. Some people initially experience a more generalised, whole body pain. The attacks usually consist of pain described as stabbing or burning, or abnormal skin sensations such as tingling or itchiness. Damage to these small fibres can also affect the autonomic nervous system.

In order to diagnose small fibre neuropathy, two tests are available in this department, **Thermal Threshold Test (TTT)** and **Autonomic Function Test (AFT)**. Sometimes you will be referred for one or both tests. It will tell you on the appointment letter which tests will be carried out.

## What is a Thermal Threshold Test (TTT)?

A Thermal Threshold Test is used to measure responses in small nerve endings which detect changes in temperature.

A small probe will be attached (via a strap) to your foot, leg and sometimes the hand. The probe heats up and cools down. You will be asked to press a button when you feel the change in temperature. The results are recorded on the computer which produces a graph.

## What is an Autonomic Function Test (AFT)?

An Autonomic Function Test involves firstly monitoring your heart rate while undertaking some deep breathing then secondly recording a response from your hand and foot whilst stimulating a

nerve at your wrist with an electrical stimulus which will make your thumb twitch.

Electrodes will be attached to your arms, hand and foot.

### **How long will the tests take?**

Thermal Threshold Test takes about 50 to 60 minutes.

Autonomic Function Test takes about 15 to 20 minutes.

### **What preparation is needed?**

No special preparation is needed before the tests and you should take any medication as prescribed. It is helpful however, if you can come wearing loose clothing, as we may need to test above your knee or elbow. Please avoid using lotions or creams on your hands and feet on the day of the test.

**Please note:** Children/babies will not be allowed in the room where the test is being carried out therefore, if you need to bring a child with you, you must ensure that someone is with you that can supervise.

### **Are there any side effects?**

There are no side effects and you can go home straight away.

### **Why do I have to come to North Manchester General Hospital?**

Small Fibre Neuropathy Tests are not available at the other hospital sites within the Northern Care Alliance (NCA), therefore you may have originally been seen at another site. You have been referred to North Manchester General Hospital.

### **Contacting us**

If you have any questions about the issues raised above, or have any other concerns, please contact the department on 0161 720 2780

**If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service**

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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**For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897**

**For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service**

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The NCA brings together Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and the hospitals and community services of The Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital in Bury, and Rochdale Infirmary (currently part of The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust).

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