

PSSD Testing

Bone & Joint Medical Center is one of a limited number of institutions in the U.S. and world-wide that conducts surgery to relieve the effects of nerve deterioration in patients suffering from neuropathy and other forms of upper extremity nerve compression. Bone & Joint Medical Center is the only such facility located in this area of the Midwest and we are extremely proud to offer our patients this unique service.

Dr. Maxwell, a board certified surgeon, is one of a limited, but growing, number of specialists in this field who have received special training to detect and relieve symptoms of neuropathy.

What is PSSD?

Neurosensory testing is a NON-INVASIVE technique for assessing nerve damage by measuring the pressure threshold felt in the skin. By testing an area of the skin that corresponds to a specific nerve with a Pressure Specified Sensory Device, or PSSD, the extent of nerve damage can be determined by the amount of pressure needed for a person to feel the touch of the testing device.

An individual with a healthy nerve can feel a very light touch and has a low pressure threshold. However, a person with a nerve that has been damaged by compression or neuropathy will require greater-than-normal pressure for the touch to be felt and, therefore, have an abnormal pressure threshold.

Your neurosensory test will be done in a quiet exam room while you are resting comfortably. A technician that has been certified by Sensory Management Services will perform the sensory test. He or she will instruct you where the PSSD will be placed. You will press a button when you feel the touch of it.

What to Expect

There are four different types of sensory tests and, depending on what is necessary, you will be asked to press a button when you feel one point, two points, one point moving, or two points moving on the surface of your skin. The examiner will touch the area being tested about five times and will test both the left and right sides.

Do I Need Annual Tests?

If you have an abnormal pressure threshold, Dr. Maxwell may recommend annual PSSD testing as a preventative measure. Abnormal nerve conditions have the potential to worsen and may become very serious over time. Dr. Maxwell is able to compare your annual sensory tests to see if the nerve condition is worsening and to determine when and if treatment is needed.

People that should take annual tests include: those with diabetes, those exposed to lead or other chemicals, people undergoing chemo-therapy or kidney dialysis, or those with a job that requires a lot of arm movement or standing.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does it hurt?

The Pressure Specified Sensory Device is non-invasive and painless. Some patients may experience some mild discomfort, but this is very uncommon.

What happens after the test?

Dr. Maxwell may recommend annual PSSD testing to monitor any changes in your neuropathy. If your condition is severe enough, the doctor may suggest decompression surgery to restore sensation and strength to your affected area(s). To learn more about this surgery, please call or visit our website.

Is neuropathy preventable?

Unfortunately, there is no medical treatment to prevent neuropathy, but early detection, from PSSD testing, can reduce the risk of future complications.