

Instructions on Monofilament Testing

To test a patient's sensory, use a 10 gram (5.07 Semmes-Weinstein) nylon monofilament mounted on a holder that has been standardized to deliver a 10-gram force when properly applied. The following are steps to help you accurately complete the test:

Step 1: The sensory exam needs to be conducted in a quiet and relaxed setting. The patient must not watch as you conduct the exam (as this could skew the patient's responses).

Step 2: It is important to test the monofilament on the patient's hand first so that he/she knows what to expect.

Step 3: Using the five sites indicated on the Progress Notes Form or on your monofilament, apply the monofilament perpendicular to the skin's surface. When applying the monofilament use a smooth, not jabbing motion and administer enough force to cause the monofilament to bend or buckle. The monofilament should not slide across the skin or make repetitive contact with the skin. The total duration of the approach, skin contact and departure of the monofilament should approximately last 1.5 seconds.

Important: Do not apply the monofilament on an ulcer site, callus, scar or necrotic tissue.

Step 4: Ensuring that the patient is blinded, test each site during the sensory evaluation and record the patient's response. Have the patient say "yes" when he/she feels something. The patient must also correctly identify the site on the foot where he/she felt the monofilament. Be sure to randomize where you are applying the monofilament during the exam.

