

Sweep Test

Name: James Miller Age: 38 Date of test: July 8, 2024

Purpose

The Sweep Test, also known as the knee hydrops test, knee effusion test, effusion wave test, bulge test, patella sweep test, or brush test, is used to assess for joint effusion—the presence of increased intra-articular fluid in the knee area. The test helps detect minimal joint effusion, which indicates an excess of fluid in the joint capsule that is not visible but can be tested using this method.

Equipment needed

Examination table

Test procedure

1. Position the patient lying in a supine position with the knee in full extension and relaxed.
2. Place your hand beneath the medial tibiofemoral joint line.
3. Stroke your hand upwards towards the suprapatellar bursa 2-3 times in a sweeping motion to move the effusion from the inside of the joint capsule to the suprapatellar pouch.
4. Stroke downwards on the lateral aspect of the knee, just superior to the suprapatellar bursa, towards the lateral joint line.
5. Observe for a small wave or bulge on the medial aspect of the knee, just inferior to the patella, within a few seconds.

Results

Positive:
A small wave or bulge is observed on the medial aspect of the knee, just inferior to the patella.

- If Positive, specify the rating:

- Trace: A small bulge on the medial aspect of the knee.
- 1+: A larger bulge.
- 2+: Medial fluid returns to its position without performing a downward sweep.
- 3+: Excess of fluid that makes it impossible to stroke the medial fluid away.

Negative:
No wave or bulge is observed on the medial aspect of the knee.

Additional notes

James reported mild discomfort during the test but no significant pain. The trace effusion suggests a mild inflammatory response, possibly due to recent minor trauma or overuse. Recommend rest, ice, compression, and elevation (RICE) for the next 48 hours, followed by a follow-up assessment.

Consider further imaging if symptoms persist or worsen.

Healthcare professional information

Name: Dr. Laura Evans

Signature: 

Date: July 8, 2024