

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

for ROUTINE EEG (ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAM) INVESTIGATIONS

This leaflet is designed to give you information about the test for which you have been referred so that you can feel informed and prepared on arrival to the department.

What is an EEG?

EEG is an abbreviation of **E**lectro**E**ncephalo**G**ram, which is the recording of electrical activity produced by the brain.

Before the test

What preparation is needed?

Please make sure your hair is clean, dry and free from grease, hair spray and any other hair products on arrival.

Please continue to take your normal medication at the usual times and have your meals at your usual times. It is useful to bring a list of your normal medication with you to show to the Healthcare Scientist, Neurophysiology performing the test. If you are asthmatic please bring your asthma inhalers with you.

Please inform the Healthcare Scientist before the start of the test if you have previously suffered any allergic skin reactions to sticky plaster or latex so that alternatives may be used.

How is the test done?

The test usually takes about 45 minutes to 1 hour, but longer recordings of over 1 hour may be needed for some people.

We will start by taking measurements of your head and then attach 23 small discs onto your head using a sticky paste in your hair and tape to hold them in place on your skin. The skin under each disc has to be rubbed gently to ensure the discs have good contact with your skin. The discs are disposable and a new set is always used for each patient.

Your heart rate will also be recorded from sticky tabs placed on both of your hands or shoulders.

The discs are attached to long wires connected to the EEG machine to enable recording of your brain activity. The recording itself takes about 20-40 minutes. You will be sitting or reclined in a comfortable chair during this time and the technician will ask you to relax and follow simple instructions, such as to open or close your eyes.

With your consent, a video recording is also made throughout the test. This can be particularly useful if you have any symptoms during the EEG and will also enable any movements, which may affect the recording, to be viewed by the doctor reporting your test. If no symptoms are witnessed during the test the video will be deleted. We will ask you to sign a consent form if we think it may be useful to retain any parts of the video recording.

One or both of the following exercises **may** also be needed during your test:

- **Deep breathing.** You may be asked to breathe deeply for about 3 minutes, usually with your eyes closed. This often causes a light-headed feeling or tingling of the lips or fingers. This is normal and will pass off when you return to normal breathing.

This exercise can produce changes in your brain wave activity that could help in your diagnosis.

Please tell the Healthcare Scientist if you suffer from asthma or have any other breathing difficulty, heart conditions or stroke before this part of the test.

- **Photic stimulation.** You will be asked to look at a bright light which flashes at different speeds for up to 7 seconds at a time. In 1.9% (or nearly 1 in 50) of cases this can provide additional important information to help with your diagnosis. There is a very small risk (0.06% or 1 in 1667) that the flashing light could cause a generalised tonic clonic seizure in people who are very photosensitive, but we will be looking at the EEG during the test and will stop the flashing light if you appear photosensitive.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will I feel anything?

You will feel your skin being rubbed before the discs are put on your head, but the investigation is otherwise painless and you will not feel anything during the recording. No needles are involved.

Will there be any after effects?

No - it has no effect on you at all. After the test the discs are removed and you will be able to return to your home, work or school. A small amount of sticky paste may be left in your hair - this will wash out easily with shampoo. Some people bring a hat to cover their hair for their journey home.

What happens if I have a seizure during the test?

You will be checked to make sure you are well enough to go home. It is very unlikely that the investigation will cause an epileptic attack, but if it does, and you hold a driving licence, you will be obliged to inform the DVLA (as for all attacks). This may affect your ability to hold a driving licence.

Will I have to wait long?

You have been given an appointment time and would normally be seen on time. Departments work to a busy schedule, so it is important you arrive on time.

Will I get the result the same day?

No- the results of the investigation need to be analysed afterwards and a full report will be sent to the doctor who referred you for the test, usually within 2 weeks.

If you have any questions or any concerns about the procedure please do not hesitate to contact our staff before your appointment or talk to the Healthcare Scientist before the start of your test.

Department of Clinical Neurophysiology
Colney Lane, Norwich. NR4 7UY
Telephone: 01603 287306 (8am-4:30pm, Mon-Fri)