

Information about Ambulatory Electroencephalogram (EEG) monitoring



What is an Ambulatory EEG?

Electroencephalogram (EEG) is the recording of electrical activity produced by the brain. An EEG is a special test to monitor your brain wave activity. The test will involve monitoring your brain wave activity typically for 48 hours.

We use this test to investigate symptoms such as seizures or blackouts. Your doctor will have explained why you have been referred for this study.

An experienced clinical physiologist will carry out the test, and it will be reported by specialist medical staff.

Before the test

Please wash your hair the night before and do not use any gel, spray, oil, or other hair products on the day of the test. Please continue to take any tablets prescribed for you unless your doctor tells you otherwise.

It is ideal if you can wear a button up top for this appointment, to make it easier to apply the equipment.

It would be helpful if a friend or family member can attend the appointment with you.

How is the test carried out?

We will give you two appointments for the Neurophysiology Department. The first will be to apply the monitoring equipment to you; the second appointment will be to remove the equipment from you.

When you attend for your first appointment a physiologist will apply 23 EEG electrodes to your scalp with glue, and will place 2 ECG electrodes on your chest or shoulders. These will fasten into an equipment bag, which you will wear at the waist or across your chest.

The physiologist will also give you a diary sheet and instructions on how to complete the diary.

You will then return home with the equipment. You should be able to carry out most normal activities, but will not be able to take a bath or shower. You will be unable to brush your hair. You should continue to take medication as usual during this time.

When you attend for your second appointment, the physiologist will remove the electrodes using a solvent. This smells strongly and can be a little uncomfortable but should not be painful.

The staff will talk through your diary with you and may ask you further questions about diary entries, and they will advise you on when the results will be available for your doctor.

How long will it take?

The first appointment will take 45 to 60 minutes and your second appointment can take up to 1 hour. We will try to avoid keeping you waiting before your test. However, occasionally you may have to wait because of an emergency case or because the clinical physiologist is busy with another patient.

Can I ask questions?

Yes. We are happy to answer any questions you may have. The results of your test however will not be available until it has been reviewed by medical staff. A report will then be sent to the doctor who referred you. They will then be able to explain the results to you in the context of your symptoms and any other tests you may have had.

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