

What is an EEG?

This leaflet can be made available
in alternative languages / formats on request.

*如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供*

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona
w innych językach/formatach.

Author: Advanced Practitioner
Department: Neurophysiology
Document Number: STHK1575
Version: 03
Review date: 01/ 10 / 2023

What is an Electroencephalogram (EEG) and why is it done?

EEG stands for electroencephalogram. It is the recording of the “brainwaves” – the electrical activity of the brain. Patients are referred for an EEG for a variety of reasons including fits, faints and blackouts and the results may assist the referring doctor in diagnosis and treatment.

Before the EEG

- Please ensure that your hair is clean. Do not use any hair products (gel, hair spray etc.).
- Please have meals as normal.
- Take your medication as normal unless otherwise directed by your doctor.
- It would be helpful if you could bring a list of any medication you may be taking.

Having the EEG

The test takes about 45 minutes. The Clinical Physiologist will make measurements of your head then after gently rubbing over the marks, attaches approximately 23 electrodes (small metal discs) using a sticky paste. The test itself is painless and then the recording takes approximately 20-30 minutes.

You will either be sat in a chair or lying down during the recording and the physiologist will ask you to open and close your eyes at various times.

What other measurements are made?

Some of the following may be needed during your test:

- Deep-breathing. This may produce changes in your brain activity that could help in diagnosis. You will be asked to take deep breaths for about 3 minutes.

- **Photic stimulation.** This is an important part of the test for people who may have seizures or blackouts caused by flashing lights. You will be asked to look at a bright flashing light with your eyes open and closed.
- **Sleep test.** A recording during sleep or after deprivation of sleep can sometimes be helpful. You will be told in advance if you are to have this type of recording.

What are the side-effects of the test?

There are no side effects of the test at all. We cannot read your mind or thoughts or emotions you may have. No electricity or needles are used – we only record signals produced naturally. This is an investigation and NOT a treatment.


Should you have a seizure during the EEG you will be checked to make sure you are well enough to go home although it is very unlikely that the investigation will cause an epileptic attack.

There is no danger to pregnant ladies or their unborn babies from this test.

What happens after the test?

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. The results will not be available to you on the same day.

If after reading this leaflet you have any questions about the issues raised above please do not hesitate to contact the Neurophysiology department and you will be able to speak to a Clinical Physiologist.



Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

 /sthknhs  @sthk.nhs

www.sthk.nhs.uk