

Multiple Sleep Latency Test (MSLT)

What is a multiple sleep latency test (MSLT)?

The MSLT is special form of electroencephalography (EEG) used in the diagnosis of sleep problems. An EEG is the recording of the electrical activity produced by the brain.

Preparing for the test

Eat as normal and continue to take any tablets as usual, unless told to do so by your consultant, and bring a list of your current tablets with you to the appointment.

Please do not drink any beverages that may contain caffeine (e.g. tea, coffee or soft drinks like cola) or alcohol on the morning or during the day of the test.

Please remember to bring the completed two-week diary sheet that was sent with your appointment letter.

Arrive with clean, dry hair free from grease, hair spray and lacquers etc. Do not wear any form of hair weave or extension, as the glue removal chemicals will damage them. If you have a hair weave, hair extensions or braided hair, please contact the department before your appointment for advice on the following number: **0121 371 6420**.

How is the test done?

The test will start at 08:00 and finish at approximately 17:00. You may wish to bring a friend or family member. A physiologist starts by making measurements of your head. He/she will draw marks on your head using a special pencil to guide them. After gently rubbing over the marks with a gritty paste, the physiologist attaches up to 25 small metal discs to your head using a sticky paste and/or tape. Some extra electrodes, near your eyes and under your chin, will also be necessary. These electrodes will stay on for the duration of the test so it may be necessary for some of them to be secured with special glue. This glue will be removed at the end of the test by the physiologist doing the recordings that day. If you are known to suffer with skin allergies or rashes, please contact the department before your appointment on **0121 371 6420**.

The test itself consists of five separate EEG recordings, each lasting 20–30 minutes. The EEG recordings take place in the department at 08:30, 10:30, 12:30, 14:30 and finally at 16:30. Your appointment is at 8am so we have time to apply the electrodes before we start with the first recording.

During the recordings the physiologist will ensure you are comfortable, lying down in a dimly lit room, and then ask you to fall asleep. During the recording the physiologist will leave the room and monitor the recording remotely from a neighbouring room.

Information for Patients

It will be necessary for the team to make a video recording of you during the Test, to monitor remotely and in the event you experience one of your sleep events (depending on your condition and if you experience any sleep events).

During your test you will need to stay on the hospital premises. You may leave the department freely in between recordings however we ask that you return at least 10 minutes before the start of your next EEG recording.

On the day of your test, you will be asked to give a sample of your urine which will be collected at the hospital. This sample will need to be sent off for analysis. The reason for the urine sample is to check for any substances in your body (e.g. medicines or illegal substances) which may affect the test. Please inform the physiologist performing your test if you do not wish to provide a sample of your urine. This will not affect the MSLT test from being carried out.

Please do not bring a urine sample with you from home.

What happens after the test?

After the test, the discs are removed and you will be able to return home or to work/school. Small pieces of sticky paste may be left in your hair – these will wash out with shampoo. There is a small chance that you may experience some reddening of the skin or soreness where the paste is applied.

You will not get the results of the test on the same day. The EEG recordings will be looked at by the clinical physiologist and reported by the consultant clinical neurophysiologist. Results will be sent back to your referring consultant. Results will be sent back to the doctor that referred you.

Further information

Please contact the department if there is any information you do not understand. If your appointment is not convenient, please call the department as soon as possible to rearrange this.

Department address and contact information:

Neurophysiology

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston Birmingham,
B15 2GW

Telephone: 0121 371 6420 (Monday–Friday, 08:30–16:30)

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk.