

A patient guide to ambulatory electroencephalogram (EEG)

What is an ambulatory EEG?

An ambulatory electroencephalogram (EEG) is the recording of the natural electrical patterns of your brain, or brainwaves, when you are going about your everyday activities. An EEG is usually taken over a period of 24 hours or up to 5 days.

Up to 25 small metal discs (electrodes) are glued to your scalp and the leads are connected to a portable recorder that you carry around in a pouch attached to a shoulder strap.

Before having an ambulatory EEG you may have a routine EEG, either on the same day or at some time before. This will be decided by your doctor and the Neurophysiology department.

The appointment will take around 1.5 – 2 hours.

The following information will help you prepare for your appointment so you know what to expect.

What should I do before my appointment?

Before your appointment you should:

- Continue to take your regular medication
- Arrive with your hair freshly washed, dried and free from hairspray, mousse or gel to ensure the electrodes stick to your scalp
- Wear clothes that button or zip at the front or a T-shirt that you can sleep in. You may also bring a loose-fitting hat or jacket with a hood to cover your head after the discs have been applied
- 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**

What will happen at my appointment?

During your appointment your scalp will be prepared with a special paste that will give good skin contact. The electrodes are attached using glue (collodion). A special sticky contact paste is used under the electrodes. In rare instances this may result in skin redness or itching. If you are known to suffer with skin allergies or rashes, please contact the department before your appointment.

You may bring a friend or family member along with you.

What will happen during the recording?

The recorder is an expensive and delicate piece of equipment so you must avoid getting it wet or damaged. Keep the recorder in the pouch attached to you at all times.

Do not remove the recorder or place it under your pillow when sleeping due to the slight risk of strangulation.

Information for Patients

For recording periods longer than 24 hours the batteries will need to be changed. The physiologist will show you how to do this if necessary. You will be provided with spare batteries and you must only use these in the recorder.

You may also need to visit the hospital on several days to ensure the equipment is working correctly and for the information to be recorded on to the main system.

Throughout the recording process you will be required to keep a diary sheet with details of any episodes that occur. This will help in the reading of your results. Sometimes it can be useful to have someone available to record your activities. Please bring the diary sheet each time you return to the department.

If there are any problems with the recording equipment or if any of the electrodes become loose or fall off, please call the department on **0121 371 6420** between 08:30–16:30 (Monday–Friday) and speak to a physiologist for advice.

You may be asked to return to the hospital earlier than your next planned appointment to sort out any possible problems.

Things you must not do during the recording Period

We ask that you do not chew gum during the recording as this can interfere with the quality of the recording. You will not be able to have a shower, bath or wash your hair whilst you are attached to the electrodes and the recording equipment. You will only be able to wash yourself with a flannel or sponge. You may wish to use wipes to clean yourself. You may wash your face avoiding any electrodes on the forehead or sides of the face.

Removing the recording equipment

You must attend at an agreed time to return the recording equipment to the hospital and to have the electrodes removed appropriately. The discs are removed using acetone (like nail varnish remover).

Some glue will remain in your hair but can be washed off at home. Brushing your hair will also help remove the glue. The electrodes may leave small pressure marks or sore areas on your scalp.

You must not remove the recording equipment or the electrodes yourself.

After the recording

The physiologist will not be able to give you the results immediately after the electrodes are removed. The EEG will be looked at by the physiologist and reported by the Consultant Clinical Neurophysiologist. The results will be sent back to the doctor/Consultant 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.

Neurophysiology

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

Information for Patients

Neurophysiology

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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 interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk