Royal United Hospitals Bath
NHS Foundation Trust

Electroencephalograph (EEG)

Information for patients.
To assist you in making an informed decision to undergo an EEG recording.

What is an EEG?
An electroencephalogram (EEG) measures the natural electrical activity in your brain. This is a diagnostic procedure and does not involve any treatment.

Purpose of an EEG
Your doctor or epilepsy nurse may order an EEG to help diagnose symptoms such as seizures, memory issues, or unexplained episodes. The information from this test can assist in identifying the cause and guiding treatment.

Preparing for your appointment
If you are unable to keep your appointment, please let us know as soon as possible so we can offer your slot to another patient.

Wash and dry your hair before attending. Do not use any hair products.

Continue taking your usual medications unless you are told otherwise.

By attending, you are consenting to silent video recording for the duration of the test.

On the Day of the EEG
- Please arrive 10 minutes before your scheduled time.
- Wear comfortable clothing
- We will confirm your consent when you arrive, and you are welcome to ask any questions at that time.
- Look at a flashing light (photic stimulation) – we will ask for your consent
- Fall into a natural sleep

During the procedure
- Small electrodes will be attached to your scalp using a gentle adhesive paste. This process is painless.
- Brainwave recording usually lasts 20–30 minutes but may be extended if sleep or a particular event needs to be observed. Most visits are completed in under an hour.
- You may be asked to open and close your eyes, breathe deeply, look at flashing lights, or rest as instructed.

Sleep Study & Melatonin

- If your doctor or nurse has requested a sleep EEG, please follow the sleep-deprivation instructions sent with your appointment letter.
- Because sleep deprivation can increase seizure risk, do not drive before or after the test. Usually, only partial sleep deprivation is required rather than staying awake all night.
- If melatonin is part of your study, bring a drink. Melatonin is typically taken in the waiting area or during electrode attachment; we will instruct you when you arrive.
- You are welcome to bring anything that may encourage sleep. This may be a pillow, blanket, eye masks, ear plugs or even music.

After the Test

- The electrodes will be removed and your hair will be gently cleaned, but you may need to wash your hair again at home.
- Your EEG and any relevant video will be reviewed, and results will be sent to your referring doctor for discussion.

Possible Risks and Side Effects

- Some people may feel lightheaded or tingling during deep breathing; these sensations are brief.
- Flashing lights may rarely trigger a seizure in sensitive individuals.
- Mild skin irritation from the electrode paste is possible.
- If you have a seizure during or after your test, do not drive and follow your doctor's instructions for notifying the DVLA.

Contact

Neurology Outpatients: 01225 821 907

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If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.

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