

Electro- encephalography (EEG)

An information guide



Electro-encephalography (EEG)

What is an EEG examination?

EEG stands for Electroencephalogram, which is the recording of electrical activity produced by the brain. You do not feel anything during the recording and there is no danger to patients who are pregnant.

The EEG gives information about the brain that is useful to your doctor in making a diagnosis in several different conditions, the most common being blackouts or fits.

Why do I have to come to North Manchester General Hospital?

EEG investigation is not available at the other hospital sites with Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust; therefore although you may have originally seen a doctor at another site, you have been referred to North Manchester General Hospital.

What should I do before the test?

- Please ensure your hair is clean when you come for the test and do not use any hair products (gel, hairspray etc)
- Take your medication as normal unless otherwise directed by your doctor
- Eat as normal
- It would be helpful if you would bring a list of any medication you may be taking

What does the test involve?

The test will be carried out by a Clinical Physiologist who will explain the procedure and take some details of your medical history. These details will be passed on to the Consultant Neurophysiologist (specialist doctor) who interprets and reports on the EEG after you have left the department.

Your head will be measured and small marks made on your scalp with a soft pencil. About 23 small discs (electrodes) are then applied to your scalp using a sticky paste. Your scalp will be rubbed with a cotton bud and some abrasive paste. The paste and pencil marks will easily be removed after the test although you may wish to wash your hair again later.

The recording itself takes about 20-30 minutes. You will be lying or sitting during this time and the Clinical Physiologist will ask you to follow instructions, such as to open or close your eyes.

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.

Please note: Accompanying children/babies will not be allowed in the room where the test is being carried out, therefore if you need to bring a child with you, you must ensure that someone is with you who can supervise them.

How long will the test last?

Your appointment will last approximately 50 – 60 minutes in total.

What else is involved?

It will be necessary to carry out the following although this will be dependent on your age and or medical history and will then NOT be carried out:

- **Deep breathing-** You will be asked to take deep breaths for about 3 minutes. This often causes a light-headed feeling or tingling of the lips or fingers - this is normal and will pass off when you return to breathe normally. Deep breathing may produce changes in your brain wave activity that could help in diagnosis. Please inform the Clinical Physiologist if you have asthma, have had a recent stroke, or have any heart problems.
- **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 or closed.
- **Video** - It will be helpful to make a video recording of you during the test. You will be asked for your consent before this is done.
- **Sleep** - If you are drowsy or fall asleep during the recording, we may record for longer as sometimes drowsiness/sleep can give us extra information.

Are there any risks?

The EEG recording is a harmless and painless procedure. On rare occasions the deep breathing and photic stimulation (activation procedures) may cause an epileptic fit in people who are prone to fits. If this were to happen and you hold a driving license the DVLA may stop you from driving until you have been seizure free for 12 months.

It is important to remember that these test procedures are far more likely to aid the doctor in reaching a diagnosis. The physiologist is aware of the potential risk and will be watching the EEG.

You may choose not to have the activation procedures carried out, in which case the rest of the test will be performed as normal. The physiologist will check you are happy to do them beforehand.

Should I take my tablets before the test?

Yes - continue your treatment at the usual times, and have meals at your usual times.

Please bring a list of your current medication with you.

Will I get the results the same day?

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.

Contacting us

If you have any questions about the issues raised above, or any other concerns, please contact the Neurophysiology Department on 0161 720 2780

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897


For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

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