

Electroencephalography (EEG)

What is an EEG (Electroencephalography)?

EEG is a test that records electrical activity of the brain. EEG is used to help diagnose certain seizure disorders, brain tumors, brain damage from head injuries, inflammation of the brain and/or spinal cord, alcoholism, certain psychiatric disorders, and metabolic and degenerative disorders that affect the brain.

How is the test done?

You will be seated in a reclining chair. The test will last 30 to 60 minutes. There is no pain caused by an EEG. Stay quiet and relaxed.

Your head will be measured to find where to place the electrodes used for the test. About 16-25 electrodes will be pasted to your scalp. The technologist doing your test will ask you to take deep breaths and flash a bright light in front of your eyes during a part of the test.

How do I get ready of an EEG?

- Your hair needs to be clean and dry. Ask your nurse if you need help washing it.
- Avoid use of oils, sprays or lotions on your clean hair.
- Long hair should not be braided, tied or pinned.
- Do not have any hairpieces or hair weaves in for this test.
- Do not nap before the test.
- Avoid caffeine drinks like coffee, tea and some soft drinks.
- You may eat your normal diet.
- Go to the bathroom and empty your bladder before you are taken to the EEG room.
- If you are to have a sleep deprived EEG, you are not to sleep the night before your test.
- If you are to have a sleep and wake EEG, sleep only half the amount you usually sleep the night before the test. For example, if you sleep 8 hours a night, only sleep 4 hours the night before your test.

Risks

The procedure is safe. However, the flashing lights or fast breathing (hyperventilation) required during the test may trigger seizures in those with seizure disorders. The health care provider performing the EEG is trained to take care of you if this happens.

It may be difficult to get the paste out of your hair, but it should come out after a few washings with regular shampoo.