

# Electroencephalogram (EEG)

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Your doctor wants you to have a test called an electroencephalogram (EEG). This test records the electrical activity from your brain (brain waves).

Small metal discs (electrodes) attached to your scalp “pick up” the electrical activity from your brain. This activity goes through wires to the EEG machine, which records the activity. The test is not painful.

The test can help your health care provider assess disorders that affect the brain, such as epilepsy, seizures, tumors, sleep apnea, infections and other conditions.

A regular EEG may take up to 60 minutes. An EEG without sleep may take 90 minutes to 2 hours.

## Before a Regular EEG Test

- Do not eat chocolate or drink coffee, tea or soft drinks with caffeine for 24 hours before the test.
- Take any medicines as usual unless your health care provider tells you otherwise.
- Do not take any sedatives or sleep medicines before the test.
- Eat regular meals before the test.
- You will be asked to wash your hair well. Only use shampoo, no conditioners, gels or hair sprays. (You do not have to have your head shaved for the test.)

## Your Appointment

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. / p.m.

Report to: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you need to cancel your test, please call at least 24 hours in advance.

- You may wear regular clothing.
- Bring a list of your current medicines.

## Before an EEG Test Without Sleep

- Do not eat chocolate or drink coffee, tea or soft drinks with caffeine for 24 hours before the test.
- You must stay awake for most of the early morning of your appointment. Make sure you get no more than 4 hours of sleep total. For example, if your test is scheduled for 8:30 a.m., do not sleep past midnight.
- Take any medicines as usual unless your health care provider tells you otherwise.

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- Do not take any sedatives or sleep medicines.
- Eat regular meals before the test.
- You will be asked to wash your hair well. Only use shampoo, no conditioners, gels or hair sprays.
- You may wear regular clothing.
- Bring a list of your current medicines.

## During the Test

- The technologist will ask you questions about why you are having the test.
- The technologist will measure your head and mark it with a wax pencil. He or she will apply a gritty lotion to your scalp (and possibly the earlobes), then fill the electrodes (small metal discs) with a gel.
- You will not feel anything during the test. You will relax in a reclining chair or bed.
- The room may be darkened. The technologist may stay in the room with you.

- Equipment connected to the electrodes records your brain's activity and saves it to a computer.
- Your brain waves will be recorded while you do different activities, which may include:
  - opening and closing your eyes
  - looking at a bright, flashing light
  - breathing deeply and quickly.

## After the Test

- The technologist will remove the electrodes and glue from your head using a special cleaner on a cotton ball. You will be able to clean up after the test.
- You may resume your normal routine.
- A neurologist will review and interpret your EEG.
- The results of the test will be sent to your health care provider.