

Electroencephalograph

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio tape or computer disk, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please telephone the PALS desk on 01271 314 090.

What is an Electroencephalograph?

An electroencephalograph (EEG) is a test that looks at the function of the brain. The brain works by a series of nerve impulses, which cause electrical signals within the brain. These signals are also called brain waves and can be recorded through the skin on the head (scalp).

A routine EEG is a safe method of recording brain function without putting the child to sleep with any medicines. This provides an overall view of brain function as part of neurological investigations.

What happens before the test?

You will be contacted by the EEG department regarding the appointment. When you arrive at the department please book in at the reception where the staff will check your details and ask you to take a seat.

What preparations are needed?

- Please make sure that the child's hair is clean on the day of the test, with no mousse, gel, oil or hairspray
- Please make sure there are no head lice in the hair
- The child can continue to take any medications as normal
- Please bring a list of any medications with you
- The child may eat normally before the appointment.

What does the test involve?

A trained person will attach small silver discs (electrodes) to certain points on the child's head using a soft paste. Often he/she will measure the head beforehand and mark the points with a soft pencil before attaching the electrodes. Before the wires are attached, he/she will clean the area of the scalp with a cotton bud and apply some cream. Once all the wires are attached, the child can either lie down on a bed or sit comfortably and relaxed.

During the test the child may be asked to open and close their eyes at various points; to breathe deeply or to look at bright flashing light. It is normal for the child to feel slightly lightheaded or for their lips/fingers to feel tingly – this will subside after the test. The child will be monitored closely throughout.

How does the test feel?

- The procedure is not painful but may feel slightly strange
- No needles or electricity are used for the test
- The test is purely diagnostic; it is not a treatment
- It will not affect general health
- If the child has any known allergies to cosmetics/creams/lotions/sticky tape please inform the EEG department before the test.

How long will it take?

Usually the test is completed in an hour.

How will it feel afterwards?

The scalp electrodes remove easily and painlessly with water. Hair might feel a bit sticky until it is washed. Once the electrodes are removed the child is free to go home.

Where is it done?

The test is done at the EEG/neurophysiology department in Ladywell Unit, Level 1, North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple. Please use the main public car park. The Ladywell unit is a separate building behind the main hospital building, past the A&E department and on the left.

[Click here](#) for a hospital map.

Are there any risks?

It is extremely rare for the procedure to have an adverse reaction, but there is a very small risk (less than 1 in 1000) that activities such as deep breathing or using light to stimulate may cause a fit. Medical attention will be available if such an incident should occur during the test.

Follow-up

You will not receive the results immediately after the test as it needs to be seen by a specialist. Your consultant will be sent a copy of the report in a few weeks time and will be in contact with you.

Further information

If you have any questions, please telephone the neurophysiology department, Barnstaple hospital on **01271 322 313** and you will be able to speak to a member of staff who will be happy to help you.

More information about the EEG test is available here: www.ansuk.org/tests_eeg.php

References

Epilepsy Action (www.epilepsy.org.uk/info/diagnosis/eeg-electroencephalogram)

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or e-mail: ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple. Alternatively, it may be possible for us to arrange an appointment in your area.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of the ward staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

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