

Electroencephalogram (EEG)



What is an electroencephalogram (EEG)?

An electroencephalogram (EEG) is a test that records electrical signals in the brain. An EEG can help your child's doctor learn about how your child's brain works.

What should I do to help my child prepare for the test?

Some guidelines to follow include:

- Your child should be sleepy for the test.
 - Keep your child up 2 to 3 hours later than normal the night before the test.
 - Wake up your child 2 to 3 hours earlier than normal the morning of the test.
 - Children over 3 years of age should not sleep more than 5 hours the night before the test.
- Your child can mostly eat and drink like normal. They may not have foods or drinks with caffeine or high sugar content.
- Wash and rinse your child's hair the night before the test. Do not use conditioners, hair sprays or other hair products.
- Bring these things as needed:
 - Comfort item, such as a pacifier or blanket
 - Full bottles if your child still takes bottles
 - Diapers
- If your child is on any medicines:
 - Please bring a list of them with you.
 - Give them at their regular times unless your child's doctor gives you different instructions.

What will the test be like?

- A technologist:
 - Will place wires called electrodes (small, flat, round discs) on your child's scalp. The electrodes do not hurt or shock your child.
 - May wrap your child's head in gauze to hold the electrodes in place.
 - Will attach the colored wires to a machine. The machine records the electrical activity of the brain.
- Photo activation (light stimulation) may be used for children 6 months and older. A strobe light is connected to the machine.
- During the test, your child:
 - Will need to sleep.
 - Should not feel any pain.
 - Will not have their hair cut or shaved.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Electroencephalogram (EEG), continued

- May be asked to blow on a pinwheel if 5 years of age or older to help cause a seizure. Then the machine can record what your child's brain does during a seizure.

What happens after the test?

The technologist will:

- Remove the electrodes and wires.
- Give special instructions if needed and tell you when you may leave.

When do I get the results?

The technologist cannot provide the results. A neurologist (a doctor who cares for the nervous system) will review the EEG and send the results to your child's doctor.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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