What to Expect during your Inpatient EEG Test at Seattle Children’s
A note for parents/caregivers:

This book was written for patients of different ages and follows a common patient experience. Since patients have different reasons for having an inpatient EEG, and may have other health conditions, some sections may not apply to your child.

Some children can cope with a lot of information and others become anxious when given too much information. Read this first and choose which sections to share - You know your child best.

This book follows the process of coming to Children’s for an inpatient EEG, including admission, steps of the test itself and what to expect during your stay. If your doctor has ordered sedation for the electrode placement, please read the section on electrode placement for sedation, starting on page 7.

We encourage you to be a part of your child’s EEG experience as much as possible. You will be present with your child during their inpatient EEG electrode placement. You will need to be at bedside throughout the hospitalization.

You can watch a video about getting an EEG at seattlechildrens.org/EEG.

If you have more questions or would like to schedule a Child Life consult (includes medical play and/or a tour), please contact:

Seattle Children’s Surgical Unit
Child Life Specialists
206- 987-1826
You will be having a test called an EEG. Many kids come to the hospital to have this test done.

EEG stands for electroencephalogram, which is a recording of your brain’s electrical activity. Small metal cups, called electrodes, will be used to test how your brain works.

Read on to learn what it might be like.

Electroencephalogram (‘elec-tro-in-sef-a-lo-gram’)
You will need to stay overnight at the hospital for your EEG test. Some kids stay one night and some stay a whole week.

How many nights will you stay at the hospital?
Here are some things you may want to pack for your stay at Seattle Children’s:

- tops that button or zip up the front
- pajama bottoms
- slippers or cozy socks
- games
- art projects
- homework
- stuffed animals
- your favorite pillow
- video games
After checking in at the entrance desk, you will go to the Epilepsy Monitoring Unit (EMU).

You will get an ID band that has your name and birthday on it. Many people will ask to look at your ID band while you are here. If you brought a favorite stuffed animal with you it can have an ID band, too. Just ask!

Some kids need to be asleep while they put the electrodes on.

**If this is you, go to page 7.**

**If not, skip to page 11.**

Count how many people ask to see your ID band while you are here.
Some kids need to be asleep so they do not feel the electrodes being put on. If this is you, you go to the Surgery Center waiting area next. Here you can sit and read, play a video game, or listen to music you brought from home.
When your name is called, you will be taken to a private room. This is where you will change into a hospital gown and socks.
Now it is time to fall asleep. Most kids fall asleep by breathing their sleep medicine. To do this, a small mask fits over your nose and mouth. The doctor will attach the mask to a tube that gives you air and sleep medicine. Some kids say this mask feels soft and squishy. Your parents may be able to stay with you until you fall asleep.

You might get to pick a smell to put inside your mask. Which flavor will you choose?

Strawberry? Orange? Bubblegum? Root beer?
While you are asleep, techs will put the electrodes and soft helmet on your head.

Afterwards you will wake up in a recovery room. You will also have soft boards on each arm, reminding your hands to stay away from your head. Once awake, you will be taken to a hospital room where you will spend the night. Your family will be waiting for you.

To find out what happens next, skip to page 20.

Ask your doctor if your mom or dad can be with you when you fall asleep.
If you will be awake while they put on the electrodes, you and your family will be taken to your hospital room after you check in. You can put your overnight bag here. Your nurse will say hi and ask for your weight and height.

What special things will you pack to bring with you?
The EEG tech will bring you to the treatment room. The treatment room is where the EEG tech will put the electrodes on your head.

You can bring your tablet or music (sorry, no ear buds during the hook up!) to enjoy while you are in the treatment room.

It takes about 1 hour. What would you like to do during that time?
Electrodes are small metal cups with thin wires. The metal cup has a button part on the end which will be placed on your head.
How the electrodes are put on:

1. The tech will measure your head with a measuring tape.

2. The tech will mark your head with a red pencil. There will be lots of red marks on your head. They show the tech where to put the electrodes on.

3. The tech will rub a sandy soap on top of the red marks. Some kids say this part feels scratchy.
4. The electrodes go on. They have a little paste on them so that they will stick to your head.

A small piece of cloth called gauze helps the electrode stay on. It is wet with a stinky glue and needs to be dried with an air blower.

The air blower is loud, and some kids like to know when it is going to be used.

Would you like the EEG tech to count to 3 before they turn on the air blower?
You will have a few more electrodes on other parts of your body, too — one on your cheek, one on your chest and two on your arm.

These electrodes do not use the glue and air. They are taped on to keep them in place.
5. The EEG tech will put a small stocking cap on your head. Some kids wear a soft helmet to keep their electrodes on.

You will also have a small backpack that holds part of the electrodes. You will keep this backpack on all the time.

Where else do you wear a backpack? What is usually in it?
You’re set up!

You may have some other tests in the treatment room, like blowing on a pinwheel and looking at a blinking light.
After you are done in the treatment room, you and your parents can go back to your room where you left your things.

When you get there, your backpack will be hooked up to the monitor to help do the EEG test. The monitor looks like a TV screen, and you are the star!

Can you see yourself on the screen?
While you are here, lots of people will come to your room to say hi and talk with you and your parents.

You need to stay in your room during the whole EEG test. We can help make sure you have lots of fun activities to keep you busy. You can play with the toys you brought from home. Volunteers can bring you toys, blocks, books and music. Sometimes video games are available, too!

What will you bring from home to play with? (Note: electronic toys need to be battery operated.)
When the test is done, it is time to take off the electrodes. The EEG tech will come to remove the glue and electrodes with a remover.

This part is sticky and may be smelly!
When the electrodes are off, the EEG tech will give you a bottle of lotion for your hair to help get the glue out. Then you will need to take a shower or a bath.

After the nurses and doctors talk to you and your parents, it’s time to go home!

What is the first thing you want to do when you get home?
When you go home, you may have some glue left in your hair. You can use a fine-toothed comb and lotion or conditioner to get it out. If there is still some left, you can use a small amount of nail polish remover. We will give you instructions.

We hope this has helped you know what to expect during your EEG test. We are happy to answer any questions — feel free to ask!
Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child’s nurse.

- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.