**Outpatient EEG Tests**

**Watch a video about getting an EEG:** seattlechildrens.org/EEG

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**What is an EEG?**

An EEG (electroencephalogram) is a painless recording of the brain’s electrical activity. We will put small, flat, metal circles that send information to a machine (electrodes) on your child’s scalp to test their brain function.

**How are the electrodes put on my child?**

- The person who will do the test is called an EEG technologist, (or EEG tech).
- The EEG tech measures and marks several spots on your child’s head with a crayon.
- We will place several electrodes on your child’s head using a glue which needs to be applied on clean, dry and product-free hair. The EEG technologist will part your child’s hair in order to reach the scalp for proper placement of electrodes. The glue washes out when the test is done.
- It takes up to 20 minutes to put all the electrodes on. Your child will need to keep their head and body completely still during this time. We may ask you to hold your child’s cheeks to keep their head still.
- If your child is 4 or younger and still moves too much, we may wrap their arms snugly, so we can work as quickly as possible.
- If your child is 5 or older, your child cannot be held still by anyone (parent or staff), so they must be able to stay still on their own if they are going to be awake during the electrode placement. If they are not able to be still, your doctor may order medicine to relax your child (sedation) for the electrode placement. If your doctor has ordered this, the same process will happen while your child is asleep.
- We know that children react differently to getting an EEG. We will attempt to meet your child’s needs.

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**To Learn More**

- Neurodiagnostic Services
  206-987-2081
- Ask your child’s healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org/EEG

**Free Interpreter Services**

- In the hospital, ask your 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.
Outpatient EEG Tests

What happens during an outpatient EEG?

After we place the electrodes, the EEG tech will start the recording and test your child's brain waves in a few different ways. These are the tests we may ask your child to do:

- Breathe deeply for up to 5 minutes
- Respond to flashing lights
- Count and remember things
- Open and close their eyes
- Lie quietly or sleep

At the end of the recording, the EEG tech will take the electrodes off your child's head with water or glue remover. This will not hurt your child.

How do I get my child ready for the test?

Before the appointment, please:

- Please call to reschedule if you or your child have flu-like symptoms.
- Try to avoid sleep or naps before the test. See the section called “Instructions for keeping your child awake.” This is not necessary if your child has autism spectrum disorder, a developmental delay or will be sedated during the electrode placement.
- Wash and dry your child’s hair the day before or day of the test. Avoid using any products in your child’s hair so that the electrode glue will stick well. An EEG tech will part your child’s hair in different ways in order to reach your child’s scalp for proper placement of electrodes.
- Give medicines as scheduled, unless your child’s healthcare team gives you different directions.
- Let your child eat and drink before the test but avoid caffeine and sugar.
- Take your child to the bathroom before the appointment time.
- Bring things that make your child feel comfortable like a bottle, pacifier, blanket or toy.
- If appropriate, talk with your child about what to expect. Visit seattlechildrens.org/eeg. Click on “+Helping your child prepare.” The page has links to videos and other materials, including the children’s book “What to Expect During Your Outpatient EEG.” The book shows what it’s like to have an outpatient EEG at Children’s.
- Only one parent or caregiver is allowed in the EEG lab with your child.
- If you have other children, please arrange childcare ahead of time.
- Please be on time. If you are more than 20 minutes late, we may have to reschedule.

When will I know the results of the EEG?

The EEG tech who performs the test cannot give you any information about the results of your child’s test.

The EEG is read by one of our pediatric neurologists, and the results are shared with the doctor who ordered the test. Please call your doctor 5 business days after the EEG test for results.
Instructions for keeping your child awake

It is very important that your child sleep less than normal before the test. This is because we want your child to fall asleep during the test, so we can see your child’s brain function during sleep. If your child has autism spectrum disorder or developmental delays, have them sleep the normal amount before the test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of child</th>
<th>Amount of sleep deprivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 months</td>
<td>Normal sleep but no nap prior to test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months to 1½ years</td>
<td>2 hours less sleep and no nap prior to test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1½ to 2½ years</td>
<td>3 hours less sleep and no nap prior to test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2½ to 3½ years</td>
<td>3½ hours less sleep and no nap prior to test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3½ to 6 years</td>
<td>4 hours less sleep the night before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 years and over</td>
<td>5 hours less sleep the night before</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seattle Children’s offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children’s will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201. This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children’s. However, your child’s needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child’s healthcare provider.

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