

This information will help you to understand what happens when you have an EEG (electroencephalogram) exam. The recording procedure usually takes one hour. However, your appointment may take up to 90 minutes if it takes you a little longer to relax. You will be in good hands. Our specially trained technicians perform thousands of EEG exams every year.

What is an EEG?

The electroencephalogram (EEG), or “brain wave,” is a record of the brain’s electrical activity. Small electrodes are placed on your scalp and an instrument called an electroencephalograph records your brain waves onto a computer. This test gives your doctor important information about the health of your brain and how it functions. Your doctor may ask for you to have additional EEG exams to decide if the treatment program they designed for you is effective.

To help ease any concerns you may have about this exam, please know that an EEG:

- does not hurt
- does not read your mind
- does not determine whether you are emotionally or mentally ill
- does not give you electric shocks
- is not a treatment
- does not cure a condition

What you need to do on the night before your EEG

To help you prepare for your EEG, below are a set of instructions for the night before your exam:



- Stay up two hours later than usual the night before



- Get up two hours earlier on the day of your EEG



- Have someone drive you to and from your appointment



- Try to stay awake during the ride to DHMC by riding with the radio turned up or the inside of the car slightly cool



- Make sure your hair is clean and do not use conditioner; do not put any styling products in your hair



- Eat breakfast on the morning of your exam but avoid any drinks with caffeine such as coffee, tea, colas, or chocolate



- Take your medications as prescribed

What happens on the day of your EEG

1. Arriving for your appointment

On your appointment date, you will go to Reception 3C to sign in. Then, you will be asked to go to the EEG waiting area. You will be taken to our EEG room where a technician will ask for some information about your medical history as well as the medications you are taking. You may have already given your physician this information. However, the technician will still need to review this information with you.

2. The EEG room

One of our technicians will lead you into a small room for your exam. This arrangement is set up to give you a quiet, restful space to relax. The technician has been specially trained for this work and will be happy to answer any questions you have about the procedure itself, or about the machine.



EEG room

3. Getting you ready for the EEG

The technician will ask you to lay down on a bed and will measure your head with a ruler to make marks of where the electrodes will be placed. Then, the technician will apply the electrodes on the marked spots on your scalp using a small amount of liquid to prevent the natural oils of your hair from interfering with the exam. You will then close your eyes and relax.



Measuring & marking for placement of electrodes



Patch to hold the electrode in place



All electrodes in place