

If you have any questions, please talk with your physician.

Epilepsy Monitoring

Your physician ordered extended electroencephalogram (EEG) testing with video monitoring for you. Video EEG monitoring can show seizure activity or any unusual electrical activity in your brain and how your body responds to it. This test can help your physician find the problem so they can give you the right treatment.

You will need to stay in the hospital for several days for this testing. You will have the testing in a private room in the Northwestern Memorial Hospital Epilepsy Monitoring Unit (EMU) using special monitoring devices.

Before you come to the hospital

An epilepsy clinic nurse will call a few days before you come to the hospital to get updates and give you instructions. They may ask you not to take the medications you take for seizures. But, you should continue to take all your other prescribed medications.

What to bring

Bring these with you to the hospital:

- Your photo ID
- All of your insurance information
- A complete list of all your allergies
- Your seizure log, if you have one
- A complete list of your medications including doses. If you are on newer or brand name medications, please bring them with you. The hospital pharmacy might not have them.
- Your CPAP or BiPAP machine if you have been diagnosed with sleep apnea (Bring it whether you use it or not.)
- A list of all your physicians' names, addresses, phone and fax numbers that you would like us to send the test report to.

Clothing

You can bring your own clothes. Any clothing you bring from home must be able to open completely from the front (such as a button down shirt or pajama top). Do not bring any clothes you must pull over your head (such as a sweatshirt or T-shirt). Bring only short-sleeved tops since you will have an IV (into the vein) line in your arm.

You can wear hospital gowns and pajama bottoms if you prefer not to wear your own clothes. We may ask you to wear a hospital gown for certain tests.

Toiletries

The EMU staff can give you the following toiletries:

- Soap
- A washbasin
- Tissues
- Baby shampoo
- Body lotion
- A toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- A comb

You may bring any other toiletries that will make your stay more comfortable. If you have long hair, a brush or wide-tooth comb may help detangle your hair when we take the EEG electrodes off. We will give you hand sanitizer if you ask.

Activities

You can bring things from home that will help you pass the time such as cards, games, books and needlework. Your room has cable TV, Wi-Fi and a phone.

You can bring a laptop, computer and mobile phone as long as it does not interfere with the EEG monitoring. Bring your device charger since you may not be able to have the equipment plugged in while you are using it.

Smoking, including e-cigarettes, is not allowed in the hospital. Your physician may order a nicotine patch for you if you smoke tobacco.

Please leave all valuables (jewelry, credit cards, money) at home.

Day of admission

Wash your hair at home. Come to the hospital with clean hair, free of any hair products, including oils. If you have hair weaves, take them out before you come to the hospital. The EEG electrodes need to stick to your head well for the best possible test results.

You will come to the hospital on a Monday. Usually, this testing lasts 5 days (Monday through Friday), but your stay could be shorter or longer as needed.

Arrival

Come to the 2nd floor Galter Pavilion Admitting Department at 675 North Saint Clair Street. Patients and visitors can park in the garage at 222 East Huron Street, across from Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For a discounted rate, bring your parking ticket with you. You can validate your ticket at the Customer Services Desks on the 1st and 2nd floor of Feinberg and Galter pavilions, and the 1st floor of Northwestern Medicine Prentice Women's Hospital.

When you first get to the Registration Desk, staff will check your information and update it as needed. They will ask you to go to the waiting area until a patient liaison comes to meet you. The patient liaison will ask for any more information needed to complete your records. They will take you to your room in the EMU on the 10th floor of Feinberg Pavilion.

Epilepsy Monitoring Unit

Once in your room, an EEG technologist will connect you to the monitoring system. A neurology resident physician will ask you questions about your symptoms and examine you.

Your care team will ask you to do the following:

- Describe your typical symptoms or seizure event.
- Mention anything that brings on your seizure events.
- Let your care team know about any special needs you may have (such as dietary restrictions or assistive devices).
- Show your physician your seizure log, if you have one.
- If you are female and of childbearing age, tell your care team right away if there is any chance that you might be pregnant.

The nurses will take your blood pressure, heart rate, respirations and temperature. They will do a short exam to check your neurological signs. They will do all these at least 2 or 3 times each day. The nurse will put an IV line in your arm or hand. They can use the IV to give you medication if you need it during a seizure.

What to expect during the video EEG monitoring

Specially trained EEG technologists will put several electrodes on your head and connect the equipment. A cable will connect the electrodes on your head to the recording equipment. You will carry the recording equipment box in a small pouch throughout the test. The EEG technologist will explain:

- How the monitoring equipment works
- How to use the event button
- Normal beeps and buzzes of the machine

An EEG technologist will monitor you 24 hours a day for any seizure activity. If you have a seizure, the care team, including physicians, the EEG technologist and nurses, will come into the room. They will ask you questions and ask you to do some motor tasks.

The nurses, EEG technologists and physicians work as a team to care for you during your stay. The care team will give you updates every day about any monitored events from the day before.

Your physicians may adjust your medications during your testing to increase the chances of you having a seizure. You might have more testing during the hospital stay. Your physician will talk with you about more testing if you need it.

Guidelines you must follow during your testing

- Your movement around the room will be limited because you need to be in view of the camera as much as possible. If you need to move out of view, call the nurse so they can move the camera into the right position.
- For your safety, you must ask for help each time you use the bathroom or get out of bed. A staff member will be with you at all times while you are in the bathroom and while you are not in view of the camera. Your safety is our greatest concern.
- Do not chew gum or suck on hard candy. This is not only for your safety in the event of a seizure, but it can also interfere with the EEG tracing.
- You may have a bandage wrapped around your head dressing to cover the electrodes. Do not touch or adjust the electrodes or bandage. If it feels loose or changed in any way, tell the nurse.
- Do not pick, scratch, pull or play with the wires around your head or body. This can make the tracing unreadable.
- Do not touch any buttons or use the keyboard on the EEG video monitor. This can erase recorded data by mistake.
- You will not be able to take a shower or wash your hair during the test. You will be able to wash up at the sink in the bathroom. The nurse can give you with extra bath cloths.

Visitor information

EMU visiting hours are 8 am to 8 pm. Visitors must check in at the front desk and wear a visitor badge. You may have up to 2 visitors in the room at a time. Visitors must be at least 12 years old. Talk with your care team about making exceptions for children under 12. Outside of visiting hours, you may have 1 overnight adult visitor. Ask your visitors not to visit if they are sick. Please follow Patient Safety Guidelines at nm.org > Patients and Visitors > Patient Safety.

Discounted hotels are also available in the area for visiting loved ones. For more information on discounted hotels call 312.926.ROOM (7666), from 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday.

Guidelines for visitors if they see a seizure

Let your visitors know that we are recording audio and video and ask them not to stand in front of the camera. There is a chance that you might have a seizure when your visitors are with you. Your visitors should stay calm and follow these steps if they see you having a seizure.

1. Call the nurse.
2. Remove any objects around you that may be dangerous.
3. Push the event button and state your symptoms to the camera, if possible.
4. Try not to block the camera's view of you.

After you go home

The care team will ask you to make a follow-up appointment with your physician before you are discharged from the hospital.

Your physicians will get a final report after your video EEG monitoring is completed.

If you have any questions about video EEG monitoring, please call the EMU patient liaison at 312.926.1673 (TTY: 711).

Our team will work to authorize your stay with your insurance company. If you would like an estimate for your upcoming admission, please call Northwestern Medicine Financial Services at 312.926.6906 and press 4.