

Routine EEG

Consent Information Sheet

Outpatients, and the parents/carers of outpatients attending the department for electroencephalogram (EEG) recordings should receive an information sheet in advance of the appointment. Included in this sheet is information about directions, the test itself, how patients should prepare themselves and what to bring with them. Dependent on the nature of the investigation and the state of a patient, consent will be requested at the time of the EEG appointment.

At the beginning of the Routine EEG appointment the Clinical Physiologist will discuss any necessary activation with the patient and confirm consent. Patients and parents/carers of patients are entirely free to withhold consent for video recording or activation procedures. If so, the recording will go ahead without these components. However, they will be informed that this may provide less complete information about themselves or the patient in question to the referring clinician.

Video recording

The appearance of a clinical event captured on video provides invaluable diagnostic information when correlated with features of brainwaves on the EEG. To capture any coincidental attacks or unusual movements occurring during recording and also for technical reasons, we record a digital video with the EEG. After reporting, only those video clips containing useful diagnostic information are retained as part of the test result, and the rest of the video is deleted.

There are two components to consent for video recording at the University Hospital of Wales (UHW);

Consent for teaching: In addition to the routine video that is part of the test, we occasionally appreciate the opportunity to use short video clips for teaching purposes if they are useful examples of, for instance, unusual attacks or conditions. Consenting to this permits the video to be used to teach those who work in this hospital or attend this hospital for teaching.

Consent to delete the video: The video recording may contain very little with respect to clinical information. Due to space taken up by the video, consent will be requested to delete it after the investigation.

Activation Procedures:

Consent is required for activation procedures, which comprise several minutes deep breathing (hyperventilation), and also using a flashing light (intermittent photic stimulation) using a range of flash frequencies from 1 to 60Hz. The two procedures are a standard part of most routine EEGs in patients able to comply and in which epilepsy is being investigated.

Activation can help to show, or “activate” EEG patterns that could be helpful in the diagnosis of epilepsy. The patient and their recording are both observed carefully during activation, and if excessive unstable activity appears on the EEG, it is immediately discontinued to minimise risk of a seizure developing. There is a small risk of these procedures provoking a seizure, which could impact on driving or work. The risk is estimated to be <1 in 1000.

It should also be noted that photic stimulation may also carry the risk of a seizure to others in the room if they are known, or suspected to be, affected by flashing lights. Anyone with the patient will be asked if they are sensitive to the flashing light, and if so, asked to leave the room while this portion of the investigation is performed.

At the time of the appointment we will use specific guidelines to decide whether or not activation is appropriate, based on factors including appearance of the EEG, the age and ability of the patient and whether or not epilepsy is suspected. Activation procedures are only offered if they are likely to add to the value of the test but are not always required. If you need clarification, please contact us.

In children, activation can only be carried out if there is a parent or legal guardian present at the appointment to give consent.