CPNI
Cyprus Paediatric Neurology Institute
Παιδονευρολογικό Ινστιτούτο Κύπρου

LEAFLET FOR PARENTS · EEG LABORATORY

Your child's EEG: how to prepare and what to expect

An EEG (electroencephalogram) records the natural electrical activity of the brain through small sensors placed on the scalp. It helps us to investigate seizures and other episodes, and to choose the right treatment for your child.

It does not hurt

An EEG only records. There are no needles and nothing goes into the body.

About one hour

A routine EEG visit usually takes about an hour from start to finish; the recording itself takes 30 to 60 minutes.

During the test

With babies and young children, a parent usually stays in the room and holds them. With older children, a parent may stay or wait just outside. We will try to help your child fall asleep, and the neurophysiologist will advise what is best on the day.

Before you come

- ✓ Wash your child's hair the night before and dry it well. Do not use oil, gel, spray or conditioner.
- ✓ Give regular medicines as usual, unless we have told you otherwise.
- ✓ Let your child eat normally. A hungry child finds it harder to stay still.
- ✓ Bring your child a little tired: see the sleep advice below.
- ✓ Avoid cola, energy drinks, tea, coffee and chocolate on the day.
- ✓ Take out braids, hair extensions and hair accessories if you can.

We recommend some sleep deprivation

An EEG tells us more when the child is drowsy or falls asleep. We therefore recommend some sleep deprivation before the test, especially for children over 2 years of age.

- ✓ About 3 hours less sleep than usual: your child goes to bed later and wakes up earlier.
- ✓ Keep your child awake on the way to the clinic. No naps in the car.
- ✓ Bring milk, and whatever helps your child fall asleep: a bottle, a dummy, a blanket or a soft toy.
- ✓ Expect your child to be tired for the rest of the day.

What to bring

- A favourite toy, book or tablet, and a drink and snack.
- For babies and young children: milk, a bottle, dummy or comfort blanket.
- A list of your child's medicines.
- Your seizure diary and any videos of the episodes.
- The referral letter, if you have one.

On the day, step by step

1. Small sensors are placed on the scalp with a soft paste. The paste feels cold and sticky, but it does not hurt.
2. Your child sits or lies quietly, sometimes with eyes open and sometimes closed, while we record. It helps if your child falls asleep.
3. We may ask your child to breathe deeply for a few minutes, like blowing out candles, and to look at a flashing light.
4. We take the sensors off. The paste washes out with ordinary shampoo.

Deep breathing and flashing lights help us to see patterns that may not show at rest. Very occasionally they can bring on a seizure in a child who is prone to them. We will explain this and ask for your agreement first.

Helping your child on the day

- Explain it simply beforehand: "They will put small stickers on your head to see how your brain is working. It does not hurt."
- Practise at home: lying still, closing eyes, and blowing a paper windmill.
- Babies and toddlers can be fed or cuddled while the sensors are put on.
- Tell our office in advance if your child is very anxious, has autism or finds new places hard. We will allow more time.

If your child is having an ambulatory EEG

This is a longer recording that your child wears at home, from a few hours up to 48 hours. The sensors are fixed more firmly and connected to a small recorder carried in a bag. Your child can play, eat and sleep as usual.

- ✓ Dress your child in a top that buttons or zips at the front.
- ✓ No bath, shower, hair washing or swimming while the recorder is on.
- ✓ Avoid chewing gum, which disturbs the recording.
- ✓ Write down the time of any episode in the diary we give you, and what your child was doing.
- ✓ Come back at the agreed time to have the sensors removed.

Please call us before the test if

- ✓ your child is unwell, for example with a fever or a bad cough
- ✓ your child has head lice, so that it can be treated first
- ✓ you cannot come, so that we can offer the time to another family

After the EEG

- ✓ Your child can go home, or back to school, and eat and play as usual.
- ✓ Wash the hair that evening to remove the paste.
- ✓ The recording is reported by our specialists.
- ✓ A routine or sleep EEG is usually done on the same visit as your consultation, and the results are explained to you on the same day. For an ambulatory EEG, the results are explained once the recording has been reported.

Contact CPNI

To book or change an EEG, call our office on +357 22 476 627 (Monday and Wednesday 08:30–13:30 and 14:30–17:30, Tuesday and Friday 08:30–13:30 and 14:30–17:00, Thursday 08:30–13:00), or email cpni2007@gmail.com.

More leaflets and information: www.cpni.com.cy

This leaflet gives general information. It does not replace advice from your child's doctor.

Reviewed by Dr Paola Nicolaides, Consultant Paediatric Neurologist, November 2026.

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