

# WHAT IS AN EEG?

## EEG BASICS



An EEG, or electroencephalogram, is a test that measures the electrical activity in your brain. This activity, sometimes called your brain waves, is recorded using electrodes on the end of wires that are attached to your head. The wires are connected to a computer. Your doctor will use this information to learn more about your brain.

## STEP ONE

An EEG technician, or tech, will measure your head using a paper tape measure. As they measure, they will mark up to 25 spots on your head and forehead using a skin-safe crayon. You will feel some pressure as they draw on your skin.



## STEP TWO

Next, your tech will scrub each of the spots they marked on your head and forehead with a long q-tip and gritty cream.

## STEP THREE

Now your tech will stick electrodes (small silver discs) to each of the spots using white, thick glue and a small piece of tape.



## STEP FOUR

Your tech will wind a long gauze wrap around your head and under your chin to keep the electrodes in place during the test.

## STEP FIVE

Each electrode is connected to a computer using a colorful wire, or lead. The electrodes pick up electrical charges that are caused by your brain activity that the computer records in the form of wavy lines. Your tech may ask you to perform specific tasks to produce different brain waves. You may be asked to breathe quickly in and out, open and close your eyes at specific times, or to watch a bright, flashing light.



## STEP SIX

Your doctor will decide how long the EEG needs to last. Some EEGs last for about an hour and others will require you to sleep in the hospital overnight. Once the EEG is complete, the tech will remove the gauze wrap, tape, and electrodes. The results of your EEG will be sent to your doctor to read.

## COPING

While getting an EEG can be stressful, there are many ways to make the process easier.

### Relax your body.

While it may seem difficult, keeping your body relaxed will help you feel calmer and less nervous. When you start to feel worried, try to:

- Take deep breaths, counting to 5 as you inhale and then counting to 5 as you exhale
- Listen to music or watch a video
- Imagine how your body feels when you are relaxed
  - Where are you?
  - What are you doing?
  - Who are you with?

### Tell the medical team what might help you feel more comfortable.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Would you like to sit up or lay down?
- Would you like a support person to sit next to you or hold your hand?
- Does it help you to watch the procedure or to look away? You can use a mirror or front-facing camera on a phone or tablet