

Preparing Your Child for an EEG at Inova Children's Hospital



Getting Ready...My Child is Having an EEG at Inova Children's Hospital

At Inova Children's Hospital, we are committed to providing the very best care to your entire family. When planning a visit, we know how important it is to know what to expect. This will help you and your child have the positive experience here.

Your child's doctor has ordered an EEG. This booklet can help you get ready for this test, and is broken up into these sections:

- What's an EEG?
- What are the Steps of an EEG?
 - Applying the Leads
 - What Will My Child Feel?
 - During the Test
 - Removing the Leads
- How Do I Explain the EEG to My Child?
- How Can Child Life Help My Child?
- What Should We Bring to the Hospital?
- Where Do We Check In?

What's an EEG?

An electroencephalogram (EEG) tracks and records brain wave patterns, which tell the body what to do. This is done by placing small discs called electrodes or "leads" on the head. There are many reasons why people need EEGs. Your child's doctor will explain exactly why he or she has ordered one for your child. Your doctor will also tell you if you need to adjust any of your child's medications before this visit.



What are the Steps of an EEG?

Step 1: Applying the Leads

The EEG technologist (tech) will measure your child's head with a paper tape measure. Your child will need to have several leads on his/her head. The EEG technologist (tech) will start by measuring your child's head with a paper tape measure.

The tech will use a special marker to mark where the leads will go on your child's head and forehead.

The EEG tech will also give your child a small backpack that will hold some of the EEG equipment.

The tech will attached the leads with a paste. They will put a glob of paste on the lead, place it, and put a small piece of gauze with glue on top to keep it in place. The EEG tech will use a small air blower to dry each lead for a few seconds after it is placed.

The EEG tech will put stickers attached to wires on your child's chest, to see how the heart is beating during the test.

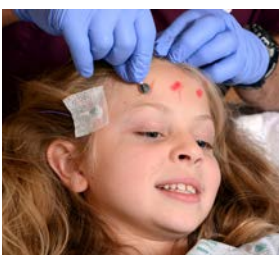
What Will My Child Feel?

Your child should not feel any discomfort during this process. Some children do not like having to hold still for this part, but we will do our best to keep your child calm and distracted. You will also be with your child the entire time to keep your child comfortable.

You and your child will notice a strong smell during this part, almost like the smell of nail polish remover. This is the smell of the glue, and is not harmful. The technologist will wear a mask and goggles, as he or she is very close to the smell.

Your child may also notice that the paste feels sandy or gritty on his or her head.

You and your child will also hear the whooshing sound of the air blower.



Step 2: During the Test

- After all of the leads are attached, the technologist will place a large gauze on top of your child's head, which serves as a hat to keep the leads in place. The EEG tech will also give your child a small backpack that will hold some of the EEG equipment.



- These leads will be connected to a machine through very thin wires. This machine records the brain activity.

- The EEG will measure your child's brain waves for a period of at least 24 hours, depending on the type of test. It is important that your child not remove the leads or pull on the wires during the testing. We understand that this can be a challenge for some children. Our goal is to keep your child happy and calm throughout the test, so that they are not bothered by the leads on their head. Your child will not feel anything through the leads on their head. The only thing that your child may feel is the presence of the paste on his or her head.



There may be some restrictions on what your child can do while the EEG is taking place, based on the reason for the test. Your doctor and the hospital staff will tell you if there are any restrictions. Your child will need to stay in the room

during the test, and we will provide toys and games in the room to keep your child comfortable.

Some EEGs will also require a video component. This means that there will be a video recorder in your room, recording what your child is doing. This is important for some tests, as the doctor needs to compare the brain waves to physical behavior.

Step 3: Removing The Leads

The tech will use warm water with a special soap to remove the glue. This will make it easier to remove all of the leads. The hospital will have hair detangler conditioning spray to help get out any knots. The rest of the glue and paste will wash out after a few good hair washes.



How Do I Explain the EEG to My Child?

It is important to begin talking to your child about their hospitalization and EEG before arriving at the hospital. This will help your child feel more comfortable with their visit. Overall, it is important to be honest with your child and to use simple and concrete language when discussing the hospital and their EEG. Below are some tips to help you begin to prepare your child for their EEG and hospital experience.

Infants and Toddlers (Birth – Age 2 Years)

We encourage you to bring familiar comfort items (blanket, stuffed animal, etc.) from home. We will involve you and keep you in direct contact with your child during the EEG lead placement. In the days and weeks leading up to the EEG, it may be helpful to play with or touch/massage your child's head so they can become familiar with this feeling.

Preschoolers (Ages 3-5 Years)

A few days before the EEG, talk about going to the hospital and what your child is going to see and feel. Talk about meeting doctors, nurses and other hospital staff. Talk about spending the night in the hospital. Have your child help pack an overnight bag with a few toys and comfort items. Also, read books about going to the hospital or incorporate the hospital or hair dresser into your child's play. It is important that your preschooler understands that coming into the hospital is not a punishment or result of anything they have done - this is a common misconception in this age group.

School-Aged Children (Ages 6-12 Years)

A few days to a week before the EEG, start telling your child about what they will experience. Talk about the sensations they will feel. Children will feel their head being touched and rubbed, this could also feel like light pressure. Cold, wet pieces of gauze will be placed on each lead. The wet solution also has a strong smell, like nail polish remover. It is important to tell your child about the smell. Also, the EEG tech will need to use cold, blowing air to dry the gauze. After all of the leads are on, a gauze roll will be wrapped around your child's head to form a hat and help the leads stay in place. Talk about spending the night in the hospital with your child and encourage them to bring a favorite toy or two with them.

Teenagers (Ages 13 – 18 Years)

Teenagers usually cope very well with this experience. During this stage of development teenagers are concerned with privacy and independence. It is important to include your teenager in medical decisions and conversations with the medical team. Teenagers should be offered opportunities to express and share their questions and concerns if any exist.

We know you know your child BEST! Please consider your child's individual development when preparing your child for their EEG and hospital experience. As mentioned before, it is important to be honest with your child. When a child does not understand their experiences they can lose trust in their caregivers and the medical team. Children can begin to imagine the worst or have unknown fears. Even if you are unsure of all of the details of your child's hospitalization, discuss with them what you know. During any hospitalization all children will be weighed and have their vital signs taken. This will include their blood pressure and temperature just like at the doctor's office.

It may also include a pulse oximeter, which is a small band-aid wrapped around a finger and has a red light, and three heart monitor stickers which feel cool and sticky.

Remember – we are here to try to make this an easier experience for you and your child. If you have any questions regarding your child's EEG and hospitalization please contact the child life department at 703.776.6486.

How Can Child Life Help My Child?

Inova Children's Hospital has Certified Child Life Specialists (CCLS) on staff to support children and their families through the medical experience. Child Life Specialists are specially trained to explain tests and procedures to children, as well as helping them through these procedures. They can also help children and teens feel more comfortable in the hospital by explaining the environment and providing developmentally appropriate activities.

What Should We Bring to the Hospital?

We will provide all of the basic supplies that you and your child will need when during the stay, including:

- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Brush/comb
- Chapstick
- Soap
- Lotion
- Hospital gown/nightgown

So that you are prepared and have all that you need for you and your child, please plan to bring:

- Parent's photo ID
- Insurance card

Where Do We Check In?

Please park in the GREEN garage and proceed to the registration desk, located in the main lobby of Inova Children's Hospital. Once you have checked in, a staff member will escort you and your child to the clinical area.

