



Melatonin sleep electroencephalograph (EEG) in children

What is melatonin sleep electroencephalograph (EEG)?

A sleep EEG is a recording of the natural electrical activity of the brain

How do we encourage your child to sleep?

We try to ensure a quiet, peaceful environment. A baby or young child may like to cuddle on your lap or lie on a bed if they prefer. We will darken the room and wait until your child is asleep or drowsy before the EEG test begins.

What happens during the test?

Once your child has gone to sleep or is drowsy, we measure the head and gently apply wires to the surface of head, using a water-soluble paste and gentle rubbing. Then a computer records the brainwave activity for about 20 to 30 minutes onto video. Afterwards the wires are removed and you can tidy your child's hair. The paste washes out easily afterwards.

Why do we record a video?

A digital video is recorded so we can easily interpret the EEG reading. Only sections that help with interpretation are kept. We will ask your consent for us to record the video before the test.

How long will the test take?

We anticipate that you will need to be at NDDH for three hours. It is difficult to give you an exact time as all children are different and it depends upon how long it takes your child to settle to sleep. Once we start the EEG, it usually takes about an hour.

What happens if my child does not sleep?

We always strive to achieve the best result we can for each child. Occasionally, a child does not sleep despite melatonin and we cannot obtain a recording. If this is the case, we will inform the referring doctor.

Are there any side effects?

There are no side effects from recording an EEG. However, your child might feel tired afterwards.

References

1. Wassmer E, Carter PFB, Quinn E, et al. (2001) Melatonin is useful for recording sleep EEGs: a prospective audit of outcome. *Dev Med Child Neurol*; 43:735–8.
2. NICE Clinical Guideline 020: Diagnosis and Management of Epilepsy in Children.
Sweis D. (2005) The uses of Melatonin. *Arch Dis Child Educ Pract Ed*; 90:74-77.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or e-mail ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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