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EEG

What is this test?

The test is called EEG. EEG stands for 'Electroencephalogram' which displays the electrical activity of brain created by neurons generating the electrical signals. It is exactly similar to ECG which records electrical activity of heart but takes a little longer time. Electrodes attached on the scalp pick up the electrical activity which is amplified on EEG machine viewed as spike, sharp and slow waves.

What are the uses of EEG?

It helps to confirm the diagnosis of Epilepsy, classify seizure and epileptic syndrome. It also quantifies seizures or epileptic bursts. It is especially useful to localise epileptic focus before presurgical evaluation. It also suggest possibilities of following diagnosis: acute encephalitis, cerebral abscess, brain tumour, metabolic encephalopathy and brain death.

What happens during the test?

During the test, you will be lying on an examination table, next to the EEG machine which is connected to desktop or laptop computer. In the test, electrodes are applied to your scalp with help of a jelly. The electric activity of brain is then recorded by the machine. You may be asked to follow certain instruction like eye opening or closure or breathing heavily by the technician. Please follow them. Intermittent photic stimulation is done routinely. Try to relax as much as possible during the test. It is preferred (not necessary) that you sleep for some time during the test. Simultaneous video-EEG recording is done.

How long does the test last?

On an average, the test takes anywhere between 30 and 45 minutes. At times longer recording is done.

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What kind of preparations is necessary for the test?

As the electrodes are applied to scalp, oil may interfere with the results. Hence it is necessary that you wash your hair with water and shampoo prior to the test. You can also clean your head with towel before the test. You do not need to fast. You can drive yourself to and from the test. You need

not bring a friend or a relative with you. You can resume your regular activity immediately after the test is completed. You need not stop any of your medications unless told specifically by your doctor. Usually in elective EEG an instruction is given to sleep less on the night prior to EEG. In case of children, they may not cooperate for the test and need to sleep. Please make sure that the child remains awake for most of the time prior to test so that he/she will sleep naturally during test. A dose of sedative (sleeping medicine) may have to be given to the child to ensure good test results. This sedative is mild and the baby would sleep only for few hours after the test.

How soon will I get my EEG report ?

The results are not ready immediately. The doctor has to see and analyse you record. Typically the technician will inform you when you will get the results. It may even take up to 1 day in complicated cases. Be patient for the results.

What are limitations of EEG?

Some abnormal activity may not be detected esp the area is small or deeply located.
Interpretation of EEG abnormalities depend on appropriate to clinical setting.
Some nonspecific abnormalities are seen in 10% of normal people.
Epileptiform activity is seen in 1% of normal people.
Benign epileptiform discharges are seen in 2-4% of normal people.

How much will the test cost?

The cost may vary as per center and as per time for which test is done.

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