

What to expect in the Epilepsy Monitoring Unit (EMU)

**7 South
Hamilton General Hospital
905-521-2100, ext. 46710**

Please bring this booklet to the Epilepsy Monitoring Unit

You are scheduled for testing at our Epilepsy Monitoring Unit (EMU).

What is the Epilepsy Monitoring Unit (EMU)?

The EMU is a 3-bed mixed gender inpatient unit that monitors patients' seizures.

It is located on the Neurology/Stroke Unit on 7 South at the Hamilton General Hospital.

During your stay, we continuously monitor and record your seizure activity.

This information helps the doctor to:

- learn more about your seizures,
- safely adjust your antiepileptic medication if needed, and
- provide the best possible care for you.

To record your seizures, we use a video camera, microphones and continuous EEG recording.

Why do I need this type of recording?

A routine EEG lasts about 1/2 an hour. It gives us a “snapshot” of the brain’s activity during that time only. It may not give us enough information to help you with your seizure problem.

Our recording has 3 parts:

- 1. Video:** A camera will record all your physical activity while your brain waves are being recorded on the EEG. By videotaping your seizures we can see exactly what happens before, during and after one of your events. This allows us to have a more accurate picture of your seizures.
 - 2. EEG Recording:** You will also have a continuous EEG recording. This allows us to detect any seizure activity that occurs, even if you are not aware it is happening. The EEG helps us learn the location in your brain where your seizures begin, and gives us information about your brain wave activity between seizures. It also will help us decide if your seizures are due to epilepsy or some other cause. About ½ of the time, we find that the seizure events are not related to epilepsy.
 - 3. Audio:** There are also microphones in the room to help us fully understand what happens during your seizure.
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Day of your admission

On the morning you are admitted to the hospital, please go to Patient Registration.

Patient Registration is located on the Main Level in the front lobby. After you have registered, you will be directed to the EMU on 7 South.

While you are in the EMU

You will be seen by:

- A Staff Nurse, who will show you to your room and the unit, and interview you for admission. The nurse is responsible for your day-to-day personal care.
 - An Advanced Practice Nurse (Nurse Practitioner), who is a nurse with advanced training and helps manage your health care needs.
 - The Epileptologist, who is a neurologist that specializes in epilepsy, and is in charge of your medical care.
 - An EEG Technologist, who will attach small metal disks (electrodes) to your scalp with a special adhesive. These electrodes will monitor your brain waves during your stay in the EMU. The technologist will explain the audio/video recording procedure used to collect data.
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During your stay

You will spend most of the time in bed or in a bedside chair. You will need to stay in the EMU area to record your seizures and for your safety. Your length of stay will depend on how long it takes us to record your seizures. We need to see about 3 to 5 of your typical seizures. Plan to spend about a week in the hospital. This may be shorter or longer depending on you and your seizures.

During your stay:

- Your electrodes will be checked daily. We may re-attach or add conducting gel to make sure we get a good recording. The electrodes will stay on until you are discharged.
- Nurses are responsible for your daily care. They will remain in the room at all times.
- You will be seen daily by the Nurse Practitioner and/or the Epileptologist, who will manage your medical care.
- Your seizure medications may be decreased or stopped to increase the chance of recording a seizure.

If you smoke, please talk to a nurse once you get to your room about the options for nicotine replacement during your stay at the hospital.

Hamilton Health Sciences is smoke-free. This means that smoking is not allowed anywhere on the grounds, including parking lots, garages and vehicles.



We are also a fragrance restricted hospital. Please do not wear or bring perfume, cologne, aftershave or other scented products.



You will not be able to wash or comb your hair during the recording.

Please wash your hair with shampoo before you are admitted.

Do not use any mousses, gels, oils, creams, hair spray or conditioner in your hair. If you have braids or dreadlocks, please try to have your hair unbraided for the EEG hook-up. This will make the hook-up more comfortable for you and will allow the electrodes to work better.



What to bring to the EMU

- Wear your own shorts, pants, or sweat suit bottoms. During your stay, it is important to **not disturb** the electrodes. You need to wear tops that button or zip down the front or back and can be removed without pulling them over your head. We can give you “tie in the back” hospital gowns.
 - Bring your slippers, bath robe, toothbrush, toothpaste, mouthwash, dental floss, shaver, and deodorant with you. You can also bring makeup.
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- Bring along some things that will help you pass the time such as books, magazines, puzzles, games, cards, crafts and personal music with earplugs. You may bring a portable laptop computer. WIFI and televisions are available at a cost. You can use a cell phone in your room.



- We will provide the medications you need during your stay in the unit. However, please bring all of your medications (both prescription and over-the-counter) in their original containers so we can see what you are taking. If you take a special medication that would be hard to get, please tell us. We will either arrange to get it here or ask you to bring it with you.



- We will provide you with your meals. Feel free to bring non-perishable snacks from home such as granola bars, cookies or crackers.



- You can bring your own pillow, comforter or family photos to help you feel more comfortable. Please note that space is limited in the room.

Going home from the EMU

When enough seizures are recorded, your medications will be restarted and the EEG recording stopped.

A follow-up appointment will be made in the Epilepsy Clinic with the Epileptologist to talk about all findings and further treatment plans.

