

Epilepsy Monitoring Unit (EMU)

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the LSUHSC/University Medical Center Epilepsy Monitoring Unit is to provide comprehensive, advanced medical care for patients with epilepsy. The unit is staffed by a multidisciplinary team of neurologists, neurosurgeons, psychologists, psychiatrists, specially-trained nurses and EEG technologists committed to providing state-of-the-art medical care.

OVERVIEW

The EMU is part of the comprehensive medical and surgical epilepsy program developed in partnership by the LSUHSC Epilepsy Center and the University Medical Center of New Orleans. Our multidisciplinary team of professionals is dedicated to providing specialized, quality medical care to persons that may be suffering from epilepsy.

The purpose of your admission to the EMU may include the following: 1) determine if the symptoms that you are experiencing are epileptic seizures or another type of event; 2) identify the type of epileptic seizures that you are experiencing; or 3) identify the location in the brain that may be the source of your epileptic seizures.

In order to gather enough information, you must be continuously monitored using video and EEG (where electrodes are attached to the scalp with skin glue) over a period of three to five days. Ideally, several of your 'typical' events will be recorded. The EEG recording will show the electrical evolution of the events and provide information about where the events are occurring on the brain. The video will also help determine the type of event that you are experiencing and give clues about the location of the source of the activity in the brain.

MEDICATIONS

You will receive a schedule for decreasing or stopping your antiepileptic drugs (AEDs) about one week before your hospital admission. Most medication changes will occur 1-2 days before admission. By reducing or discontinuing your medication, there is a better chance that we will be able to record several typical events. A hospital admission during this time is necessary because of this risk of increased seizure activity when medications are discontinued.

Before you are discharged from the monitoring unit, your doctor will re-start your AEDs and provide instructions for taking your medication. It is possible that your doctor will make changes to your medications at this time. It is necessary to get the medications at a protective level by the time of discharge in order to reduce the risk of increased seizure activity when you return home. This process may extend your hospital stay by one day. **Please bring your own medications from home.** This allows you to continue the same type and brand of medication to which your body is accustomed.

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FAMILY MEMBER/SIGNIFICANT OTHER

We ask that a family member or significant other accompany you to the EMU. It is important that someone familiar with your seizures stay with you. That person can help identify a 'typical' event and may be able to point out pre-seizure activity that may warn an event is starting. Sleeping arrangements are available but guests must bring meals or use the hospital cafeteria. *This is encouraged but not required.

EMU REGISTRATION / ADMISSION GUIDELINES

You will go directly to the unit on the day you arrive for your hospital stay. The unit nurse will contact the admission department and they will send someone to register you. For safety reasons, you must go to the unit as soon as you arrive at the hospital. Do not go to a waiting room. Do not stop for food.

I.V. INSERTION

Once you are in your room, an I.V. will be placed in your arm so that emergency medications can be given if necessary.

PREPERATION FOR MONITORING

The EEG technologist will arrive and begin connecting the EEG electrodes. The electrodes will be secured to your head with a special glue and gauze will be placed over your head to protect the electrodes from coming off. Once connected, you will be monitored 24-hours per day with video and EEG recorders.

You will be connected to a 30-foot cable, which will allow you to reach the restroom. You will be able to sponge bathe during your stay, but you will not be able to wash your hair or get your head wet. For the rest of the time, you will need to stay in bed.

WHAT TO BRING

While in the EMU, you are not required to wear a hospital gown. You may bring shorts, jeans, or any other clothes that make you comfortable. Shirts with buttons down the front are the easiest to wear while on the EMU. You may NOT wear shirts that slip over your head because of the EEG cables. Make sure to bring socks, shoes or slippers for your feet. Bring your own pajamas if you do not want to wear a hospital gown. Please bring toiletries for you and the family member that will be staying with you (toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo, etc.). The room has a TV, Wi-Fi and a sofa that opens to a bed. You may wish to pack reading materials, a portable DVD player and games.