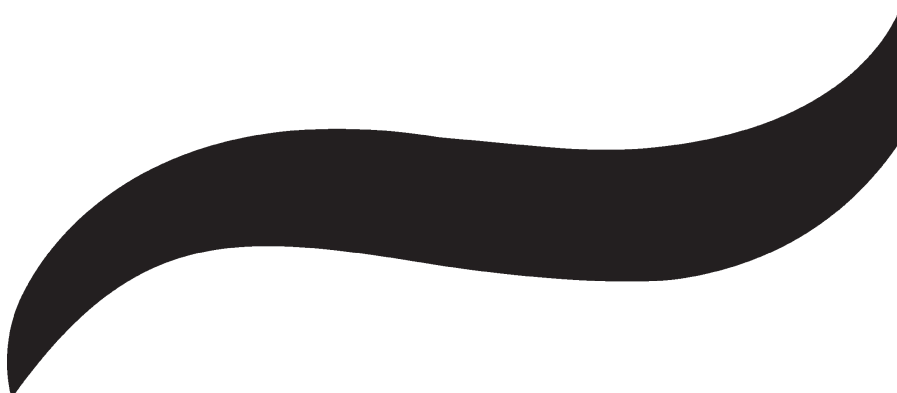




Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) Treatment

Information for patients
Psychiatry Department



INTRODUCTION

Your consultant has prescribed Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) as part of your treatment plan. This leaflet explains what it is and gives you other important information.

ECT TREATMENT

Why has ECT been recommended for me?

We usually recommend ECT as part of the treatment for severe depression when other treatments have not worked. We also use it as part of the treatment for severe mania and catatonia.

Your psychiatrist will discuss why we think ECT would help you. If you have any questions, please ask your consultant or named nurse. You can also ask to speak with the ECT lead nurse, deputy, or one of the ECT ward nurses.

You need to have a general anaesthetic to have this treatment. General anaesthetics are usually very safe, but there is always a risk of side effects and other complications. However, the risk of a serious complication is very rare. Your anaesthetic doctor will speak to you about these risks before your treatment.

What will happen before the treatment?

You will need to have a full medical examination by your doctor. This is to make sure that you are physically well enough to have a general anaesthetic and treatment. You will have blood tests, an electrocardiograph (ECG) to check your heart, and possibly a chest x-ray.

You can meet the ECT team and visit your local ECT department before you start your treatment.

Where will I have the treatment?

You will usually be admitted to hospital and have your treatments in the ECT department. You may be able to attend for treatments as a day case patient. Your psychiatrist will speak to you about this.

If you live in the North of Lanarkshire, you will have your treatment at Wishaw General Hospital (Tuesday and Friday mornings).

If you live in the South of Lanarkshire, you will have your treatment at Hairmyres Hospital (Monday and Thursday mornings).

Sometimes you might have ECT in the Operating Theatre instead of the ECT Department. This is usually because we are concerned about your physical health. It means that other doctors are around to treat you if you become unwell.

DO I HAVE TO CONSENT TO TREATMENT?

Yes. You will be asked to sign a consent form before having ECT. Before you sign the form, your doctor must explain the treatment to you. They will speak to you about the risks and benefits.

If you sign the consent form, you are agreeing to have a course of treatment under general anaesthetic. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time. If you do not wish to have ECT, you should tell your doctor. They can speak to you about other treatments that you could have.

Sometimes, you can get ECT without your consent. You would have to be in hospital under the Mental Health Act (2003) for this to happen. Your doctor must get an independent doctor's opinion before this can go ahead. If this happened, the Mental Welfare Commission (MWC) becomes involved. They would give a second opinion before you were given ECT treatment.

In an emergency, we can give ECT as a life-saving procedure under the safeguards of the Mental Health Act. We would only continue this treatment if a doctor from the MWC thought this was needed.

PREPARING FOR YOUR APPOINTMENTS

You will be able to wear your normal day clothes while you have ECT. Wear loose clothes so we can place the heart monitoring equipment on your chest. Try not to wear much makeup and remove any nail polish. This is because you are having a general anaesthetic. A member of staff who knows you will stay with you while you have your treatment.

What should I do on the day of my treatment?

- **Do** have a shower/bath if you want to
- **Don't** eat anything after midnight before your treatment
- **Do** drink clear fluids up until 7am. (Clear fluids include water, very weak diluted juice, and tea/coffee without sugar or milk)
- **Don't** drink alcohol, fizzy juice, or milk
- **Don't** eat anything on morning of treatment - this includes chewing gum

What should I do after ECT treatment?

- **Do** rest in bed/chair
- **Do** eat and drink plenty as this will help with possible headaches
- **Do** be honest about how you are feeling both physically and emotionally
- **Don't** exert yourself
- **Don't** leave the ward for the first 4 hours. This lets us look after you. We will carry on with the physical checks and keep an eye on you for any side effects.
- **Don't** leave the ward unless you are with a member of staff. We will let you know if you can leave the ward

INFORMATION FOR DAY PATIENTS

If your psychiatrist agrees, you can have your ECT as a day case patient. You should come to hospital with a responsible adult. They need to stay with you for 24 hours after your treatment. Follow the guidelines in the “preparing for your appointments” section of this leaflet. Follow the guidelines below as well.

What should I do on the day of my treatment?

- **Do** take any medication that your anaesthetic consultant advised. This should be written on the information sheet that you were given.
- **Do** go to the ECT suite at the time we told you. We will carry out pre-ECT treatment checks (Times may vary but can be between 9:00am and 10:00am).
- **Do** bring any inhalers you have been prescribed.
- **Do** bring any magazines/books/tablet/phone/etc. to occupy you before and after treatment.
- **Do** make sure that you have a responsible adult when leaving the ECT suite. They need to sign the day patient paperwork to take responsibility for you. They should drive you home or go with you in a taxi. Please do not use public transport. You must have a responsible person with you for 24 hours after your treatment

You will have been assessed by medical staff before you leave the ward. If we are concerned about your physical or mental health, we might ask you to stay on the ward/ECT suite for longer. You may need to be admitted.

WHAT DOES HAVING A GENERAL ANAESTHETIC MEAN FOR ME?

A general anaesthetic means you will have sedative medications and be “asleep” for the procedure. The following rules apply because of the general anaesthetic:

- Do get a lift/be accompanied home. Make sure you have a responsible adult with you (spouse/relative) for 24 hours after your treatment
- Don't leave the hospital if you are feeling unsteady or confused.
- Don't operate machinery or appliances for 24 hours.
- Don't be left in sole charge of young children until the following morning.
- Don't sign any legal document or make important decisions for 24 hours.
- Don't consume alcohol for 24 hours.

CAN I DRIVE WHILST HAVING ECT?

The DVLA advise that you should not drive during a course of ECT. You (or your carer) may be asked to sign a form saying that you will not drive during a course of ECT treatment.

After you have finished your treatments, it may be a little while before you can start driving again. The DVLA will make this decision. They will get advice from your doctor.

The advice is different if you have maintenance ECT. You can normally continue to drive but should not do so (or ride a bike/operate heavy machinery) for at least 48 hours after an ECT treatment.

WHEN WILL I BE REVIEWED AFTER HAVING ECT?

You must be reviewed by your Psychiatrist after every 2 treatments. This is to monitor side effects, benefits, and decide with you if your ECT should continue.

If you are attending as a Day Patient, your Psychiatrist will see you on a day that you are not having ECT.

If you are at home and you begin to feel unwell please contact:

- Your GP in the first instance
- NHS 24 (Dial 111) out of hours
- Your Psychiatrist

Your usual Psychiatrist and Community Mental Health Team will follow you up. Our ECT team may also contact you at 3 and 6 months after your treatment. They will find out how you have recovered and ask for your views on your treatment. You do not have to do this but we really appreciate it if you do. Your feedback helps us to improve our service.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

There are wide differences in how much information patients want. Some of the explanations are complicated. If a family member or carer want more information, please ask a member of staff or speak to your Psychiatrist.

The ECT suites have a number of ECT information leaflets including:

- Royal College of Psychiatrists information leaflet
- Scottish ECT Accreditation Network (SEAN)

More information can be found on the Scottish ECT Audit Network website (www.sean.org.uk) or the Royal College of Psychiatrists ECT Accreditation Service (ECTAS) webpage (<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/improving-care/ccqi/quality-networks-accreditation/ectas>).

REFERENCES

NICE guidelines: National Institute for Health & Clinical Excellence

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfoforall/treatments/ect.aspx

Royal College of Psychiatry information on ECT

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/mental-health/treatments-and-wellbeing/print-outs/ect-printable-large-text.pdf>

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Enquiry Line: 0300 30 30 243

NHS inform - The national health information service for Scotland.
www.nhsinform.co.uk
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