

Electroconvulsive Therapy ECT and Your Mental Health

**Mental Health and Addictions Program
St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton
Charlton Campus
50 Charlton Avenue East
Hamilton, Ontario**

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Be Involved

When you meet with the psychiatrist ask questions and understand the treatment before you agree to the treatment plan.

If you agree to ECT, you sign a consent form. Make sure you understand the risks, benefits and side effects of ECT treatment before you sign the consent.



What happens next?

If you are an outpatient:

You need to come to the Pre-Admission Assessment Clinic at St. Joseph's Healthcare Charlton Campus before your first treatment. You are given an appointment date and time by the ECT nurse.

This Clinic is on Level 4 of the Marian Wing. You only come to this Clinic one time before you start treatments.

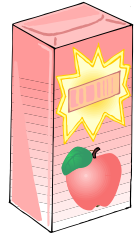
In this Clinic you meet with a nurse who tells you how to prepare for the treatments. You also meet the anesthesiologist. This is a special doctor who talks to you about having a general anesthetic. You only need to meet with the anesthesiologist before the first treatment.

Nausea

Nausea may be caused by the anesthetic or not eating and drinking for a long time.

Some ways to help are:

- have something to eat and drink such as dry toast, crackers, apple juice



- try to rest or sleep



- take medication to prevent or control nausea such as Gravol.



What is my follow-up after all of my ECT treatments are done?

You will talk to your psychiatrist and members of the health care team about how to stay healthy. You may need to take medication, join a therapy group or have one-to-one talk therapy. Together you will make a treatment and follow-up care plan.

Outpatient ECT Clinic

Follow-up during ECT treatments is important. We make every effort to schedule you in the Outpatient Clinic every 1 to 2 weeks for ongoing monitoring and assessment.

ECT Maintenance Program

This program is for people who have been helped by ECT treatments. In this program you receive scheduled ECT treatments based on how you feel. You can talk to members of the ECT team about the details.

Does ECT always help?

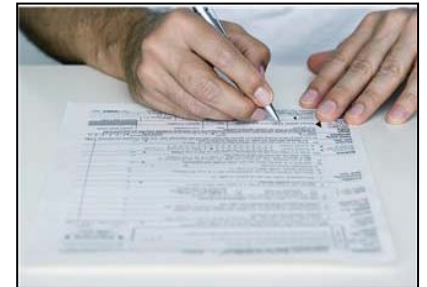
This depends on why you need ECT. Research has shown that up to 80% of people who have ECT are improved after.

This treatment often helps people who do not feel better after trying other treatments such as medications.

What happens first?

The psychiatrist will meet with you and your support person, if you choose to have someone with you.

During this visit you will learn about the risks, benefits and treatment plan for you. You then sign a consent form.



You also talk about other appointments and follow-up visits you will have before, during and after ECT treatment.

Sore muscles or stiffness

You may have sore muscles or stiffness. This is caused by the medication used to relax your muscles during the treatment. Take medication you normally use for pain control at home.



Confusion

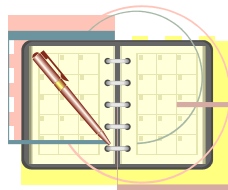
You may feel confused after an anesthetic. It is best to rest for the next 24 hours and have someone with you during this time. Confusion does not last long.

Memory Loss

You may have some problems with loss of memory. This can last a few days to a few months. You will have memory testing before starting ECT treatments and during your follow-up clinic visits. Avoid making major decisions while you are having ECT treatments.

Some ways to help:

- keep a diary and record things you want to remember
- use a calendar to record appointments and important events
- ask your friends and family members to help you



The night before treatment if you are in the hospital:

Your nurse will tell you what to do to get ready.

You will not be able to have anything to eat or drink after midnight unless the nurses give you other instructions.

The nurses help you at night and in the morning.

The night before treatment if you are at home:

Follow the instructions you were given in the Pre-Admission Assessment Clinic.

You cannot have anything to eat or drink after midnight on the night before your treatment unless you are advised that you can. Do not have candy, lozenges or gum.



You can brush your teeth.

You can take medications as advised with sips of water.

For your safety and the safety of others after an anesthetic:

- ☒ Do not drive, or operate power equipment or machinery for 24 hours.
- ☒ Do not drink alcohol such as wine, beer or liquor for 24 hours.
- ☒ Do your normal daily activities as much as you can.



Common effects after ECT

There are 5 common effects after ECT treatment:

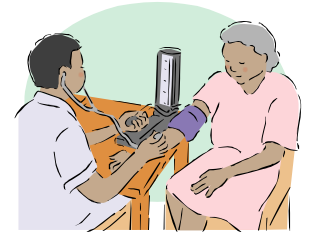
- headache
- sore muscles or stiffness
- confusion
- memory loss
- nausea

Please tell the nurse if you have any of these effects after a treatment and before you are discharge home.

If you are coming from home:

Check in on Level 10 of the Juravinski Tower at 6:15 in the morning.

An ECT nurse will help you get ready. You put on a hospital gown and go to the bathroom. You then lie on a stretcher.



Your nurse asks you some questions and records your answers. You then have an intravenous (IV) started. This is used to give you fluids and medications.

Before you go for your treatment, you remove glasses, contact lenses, dentures and hearing aids.

If you have a support person with you, this person can stay with you at all times.

You then go by stretcher to the Post Anesthetic Care Unit. Your ECT nurses go with you. Here you meet the psychiatrist, recovery nurses and the anesthesiologist.

Since St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton is a teaching centre, you may also meet students in any of the health care professions.

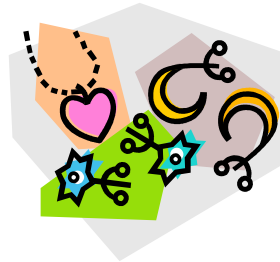
Getting ready at home

Have a bath or shower and wash your hair. Do not use any special hair products such as gel on your head after you wash it.

ECT treatment works better with clean, dry hair.



Remove all make-up, lipstick, artificial nails and nail polish from fingers and toes. Remove all jewelry such as earrings, rings, watches and body pierces and leave at home.



Leave all valuables at home.

On the day of an ECT treatment

If you are in the hospital:

Your nurse will help you get ready and go with you to the ECT area.

Ways to manage problems at home

Headache

You may get a headache. This may be caused by the anesthetic, the ECT treatment or not having anything to eat or drink for a long time.

Some ways to help are:

- have something to eat and drink
- take pain medication
- rest or sleep in a dark room
- put a cold cloth on your forehead
- take some deep breaths and try to relax
- try relaxation tapes, music, yoga or meditation

If you have a headache that is not helped by any of these methods, contact your family doctor or health care provider.



A nurse places heart monitor pads on your chest. You also have your blood pressure and oxygen level measured. You breathe through an oxygen mask.



A psychiatrist trained to do ECT places sticky pads on your head. The pads are attached to an ECT machine. The ECT machine monitors your heart, brain and muscle activity during the treatment.

The anesthesiologist puts medication into your IV so you relax and go to sleep. The psychiatrist then starts the ECT treatment that lasts about 8 seconds.

You wake up in 10 to 20 minutes. A nurse checks your blood pressure, breathing, heart rate and oxygen level regularly as you wake up. The nurse reminds you to take deep breaths and move your legs. The nurse may ask you to squeeze his or her hand and lift your shoulders off the pillow.

Deep breathing and moving helps you recover from the anesthetic faster.

About 15 to 20 minutes after you are fully awake and it is safe, a nurse takes the IV out and puts a small bandage on the site. You can take this off later in the day.

You then:

- return to your room **or**
- go to the ECT recovery area on 10th floor
- go home with a responsible adult

If you are coming from home, plan to be at the hospital 3 to 4 hours.

How will I feel after a treatment?

Most people are able to resume their normal activities 1 to 2 hours after treatment.

Some people feel groggy and need to rest or sleep after.

