

Adult Video Telemetry

This leaflet explains video telemetry, including the benefits, risks and any alternatives and what to expect when you come to St George's Hospital to have this procedure. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is video telemetry?

Telemetry monitoring is a test that looks at the function of the brain. The brain works by a series of nerve impulses, which cause electrical signals within the brain. These signals (also called brainwaves) can be recorded through the scalp.

Telemetry monitoring is like an electroencephalogram (EEG) test in that it records the brainwaves but over a much longer period, sometimes taking up to five days to get the information needed. A digital video recording will be made (i.e. you will be filmed) during the test. This enables the doctors to compare your brainwaves with your movement and / or behaviour at the time.

Telemetry monitoring is a safe method of recording your brain function without the need for sedation or an anaesthetic. This makes it a good way to get an overall view of the function of the brain. It may be done to obtain a complete night's sleep recording, to record seizures or tell the difference between seizures and other types of 'attack'. It can also be used to for patients who may be candidates for epilepsy surgery.

Are there any risks?

In specific circumstances your consultant will advise you to reduce your anti-epilepsy medication during the test. This should have been discussed with you in clinic but the reason will be to increase the likelihood of capturing seizures during the recording. This is necessary for patients considering epilepsy surgery, though whether your medication is reduced or not depends on how frequently you are having seizures. If medication is reduced, there is a risk that seizures will be longer or more intense than usual. While the purpose of the test is to capture seizures and other attacks, the doctors and nurses will closely monitor the number and type of seizures you have and will reinstate your usual treatment immediately if needed.

Are there any alternatives?

You may have had a routine EEG or a Sleep EEG. This is an opportunity to perform a prolonged EEG recording which can monitor the frequency of seizures and record a complete night's sleep recording. Video telemetry can provide your consultant with additional information about the diagnosis. If you do not have this procedure, information regarding seizure type, frequency of seizures and in some cases, suitability for epilepsy surgery may not be available to the consultant.

What happens before the test?

Telemetry monitoring is carried out on Kent Ward which is our regional neuroscience ward. You will be allocated a bed in a bay of six beds, with a dedicated nurse looking after your bay. The other patients in the bay will be adults over the age of 16. Each bay is single gender.

As you will be connected to a computer via a cable, the area around your bed in which you will be able to move about will be limited. You may wish to bring laptops, DVD players and books to pass the time during your admission. TV and Wi-Fi are available for a fee. You can have visitors during usual visiting times on the ward which are from 8am to 9pm.

A fully accessible toilet is located a short distance from your bay which you will be able to use, however it is not possible for you to bathe or shower during the monitoring period. Washing by the sink is permitted provided the equipment does not get wet. There are no cameras here.

It is helpful to make sure that your hair is clean before the test, with no mousse, gel, oil or hairspray.

Please bring all regular medication(s) to the ward. Medication should be taken as usual unless you have discussed this with your doctor prior to admission. Your medication may be changed or adjusted during your stay but this will be discussed with you by the medical team. The nurses will often take your medication and lock it away safely. It will then be prescribed on a drug chart and the nurses will administer your medication. Your medication will be returned to you prior to discharge.

You will be able to change clothes during the test, however we advise loose clothing and zip front or button front tops as opposed to clothing which must be lifted over your head.

Are there any special requirements?

Please inform the ward in advance if you have any special requirements that could help improve your stay. During your admission we aim to make sure you are safe from any injury that might occur during a seizure. You will be asked to raise the sides of your bed when sitting or lying on the bed and there may be padding on the sides to protect you from hurting yourself during a seizure. It is important to spend as much time as possible by your bed connected to the headset during your admission.

Asking for your consent

It is important that you feel involved in decisions about your care. The Clinical Physiologist will explain the test and you will be asked to sign a consent form to say that you agree to have the video recording and understand what it involves. A copy of the signed consent form will be given to you for you to keep.

If it is planned to reduce your anti-epilepsy medication during your stay this will be discussed with you and consent will be obtained by your doctor in clinic or by the ward doctor. You can withdraw your consent at any time, even if you have said 'yes' previously. If you would like more details about our consent process, please ask for a copy of our policy.

What does the test involve?

The clinical physiologist will attach small silver discs (electrodes) to certain points on your scalp using special glue. The clinical physiologist will also measure your head beforehand and mark the points with a soft pencil before attaching the electrodes. As each electrode is attached, he or she will clean the area of the scalp with a cotton bud and some cream. This does not hurt.

The electrodes are attached by wires to a small, portable box (also called a 'head box') and then to the recording machine. The clinical physiologist will record your brainwaves onto the recording machine connected to a computer and monitor them on a screen.

The duration of your stay on Kent Ward will be confirmed prior to admission. The duration is typically 48 hours (Monday to Wednesday or Wednesday to Friday) or 96 hours (Monday to Friday). The doctors may need to reduce or stop your anti-epilepsy medication for the test but they will discuss this with you in more detail before the test starts.

A dedicated video camera on the ceiling above your bed will record seizures or other disorder events during the test. You can move around if you stay in range of the camera. You will also be asked to make a note of any symptoms or seizures you have on a sheet of paper which the physiologists will give you.

You will be able to eat and drink as normal during the test. We will provide food and drink for you throughout your stay, but please inform the staff on arrival if you have any food allergies and they will ensure they meet your dietary needs.

What happens after the test?

The clinical physiologist will remove the electrodes from your scalp. This will not hurt as a liquid is applied to the glue to soften it before an electrode is removed. Your hair may feel sticky to the touch until you wash it.

If your anti-epilepsy medication has been reduced, you may be given an extra 'top up' dose of medication before continuing your usual treatment. This will be explained to you by the doctors and / or nurses prior to you going home.

What do I need to do after I go home?

You can resume normal activities upon arrival home. If you are being treated with medication, please continue with medication as advised at the time of discharge.

How long until I get the results?

You will not be given the results during your stay. The results from the video telemetry will be sent to the referring consultant. Your consultant may send you a letter outlining the main findings of the result and / or these will be discussed with you at your next out patient appointment.

Contact us

Patient Pathway Co-ordinator (Neurology) 020 8725 1796

Prior to admission, the patient pathway coordinator will be in regular contact. Unfortunately, there are unforeseen circumstances where admissions are cancelled at short notice. In these rare situations, the patient pathway co-ordinator will be in touch to arrange another mutually convenient date for you to have video telemetry.

Kent Ward 020 8725 4671 / 4672

Location: 3rd Floor, Atkinson Morley Wing, St George's Hospital, Blackshaw Road, Tooting, London, SW17 0QT

If you are running late or cannot make it in to hospital for your test, please contact the ward as soon as you can. The staff on Kent ward cannot alter your appointment and cannot give advice over the phone about the investigation. For any questions about your appointment please contact the patient pathway co-ordinator (above).

St George's Epilepsy Team

If you have any questions about your stay on the video telemetry unit please contact your local neurologist. If your epilepsy care is based at St George's Hospital do not hesitate to contact the epilepsy team.

For the epilepsy nurse specialists:

Adult.epilepsynurse@stgeorges.nhs.uk or 020 8725 4110

For the epilepsy consultants:

Adult.epilepsy@stgeorges.nhs.uk or 020 8725 4107 / 020 8725 4627

For St George's Hospital website

www.stgeorges.nhs.uk or 020 8672 1255

For the Neurophysiology department: 020 8725 4624

Main points to remember

- Please let us know before admission if you have any special requirements
- Please bring all your regular medications to the ward and take your medication as usual unless this has been discussed with you by your consultant
- Please make sure your hair is clean with no products such as gel or mousse
- Please bring things to keep you entertained during your stay

- Please wear clothes that fasten at the front with a zip or buttons as you will not be able to take things off over your head.

Disclaimer

Please note this is a generic St George's Hospital information sheet. If you have specific questions about how this relates to you, please ask your doctor. Please note this information may not necessarily reflect treatment at other hospitals.

Reference Sources

Patient Information Leaflets / Websites:

Manchester Royal Infirmary / Manchester Children's Hospital, Manchester
Great Ormond Street Hospital, London. King's College Hospital, London

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health. **Web:** www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones. **Tel:** 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



Reference: NEU_AVT_03 **Published:** March 2024 **Review date:** March 2026