

Common side effects of ECT

Patients feel slightly confused or drowsy after they wake up from ECT but this usually wears off in less than an hour. Some patients may have a mild to moderate headache, muscle pain or feel some nausea, which is less common.

Some patients may experience memory loss as a side effect of ECT, for example forgetting events right before or after treatment.

How long will I need treatment?

Some people start to feel better after four (4) to six (6) treatments. The total number of treatments is different for everyone. Most patients receive 10-12 treatments in a series over approximately four (4) weeks. To prevent a relapse, many patients continue with treatments such as medication, therapy or further ECT.

Ongoing ECT maintenance therapy may be recommended by your psychiatrist, typically this would be weekly, bi-weekly or monthly treatment.

**To reach the ECT nurse
at PRHC, contact
705-743-2121 x. 2172**

If you are experiencing a mental health or addictions related crisis:

Contact your doctor or nurse practitioner
(many offer after hours support)

Contact Four County Crisis at
705-745-6484 or toll-free 1-866-995-9933
to access 24-hour, free, confidential
crisis support (you may have to leave a
message and wait for a return call)

Find other local resources by
calling 211 or visit 211.ca

Speak to a nurse 24 hours a day at
Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000

If you or someone else needs immediate help or is in danger of harm:

Visit the PRHC Emergency
Department or Call 911

Peterborough Regional Health Centre
1 Hospital Drive
Peterborough, ON K9J 7C6
705-743-2121

Guided by you · Doing it right · Depend on us
www.prhc.on.ca



PATIENT INFORMATION

Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)

What is ECT?

Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) is a safe and effective brain stimulation procedure that has been used for over 60 years. ECT is recommended when medications and other treatments have not relieved the symptoms of certain psychiatric disorders such as major depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia.

During ECT, a small amount of electricity is applied to the scalp to produce a localized seizure of the brain. The patient is under anesthesia for the procedure which lasts less than five (5) minutes. Patients then spend about 30-45 minutes in the recovery room afterwards.

ECT is an extremely effective tool to provide relief from distressing psychiatric symptoms.

Who should consider ECT?

ECT is appropriate for patients who have not had a positive response to at least two medication trials and when other treatments have been deemed less safe or too difficult to tolerate.

Prior to receiving ECT, all patients require a medical examination & blood tests. Certain medical conditions, particularly with the heart or lungs, may require consultation with a specialist before starting ECT.

How does ECT work?

The benefits of ECT depend on producing a seizure in the brain in

a specific manner. This brief localized seizure causes changes in the chemistry of the brain that helps to restore normal function.

How safe is ECT?

Once called electroshock therapy, many people still have negative associations with ECT. However, modern procedures are very safe and painless. Patients receive general anesthesia and are asleep for the brief procedure. They can return to normal activity within an hour.

ECT is a low risk procedure, but there are risks associated with all procedures involving the use of general anesthesia.

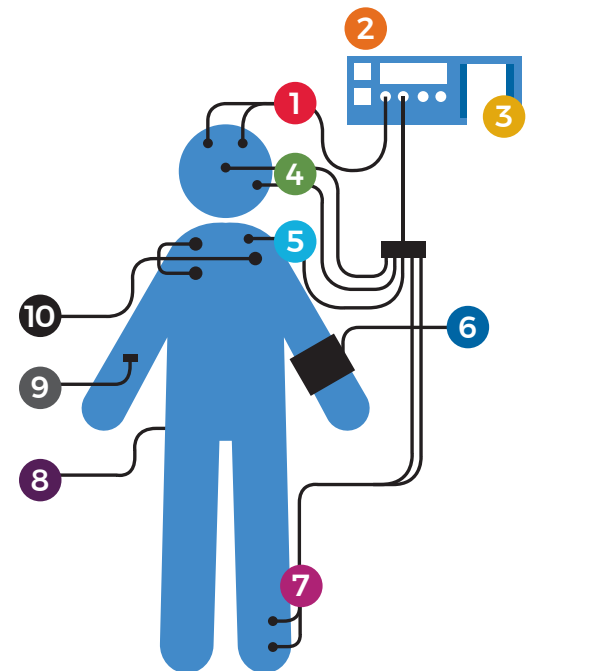
ECT is safe enough that it can be done to almost any patient with almost any medical condition.

What should I expect?

ECT treatments take place early in the morning on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Patients must have nothing to eat or drink after midnight before treatment.

On the morning of treatment, the patient checks in to the Admitting Department on Level 4, then comes up to the Level 5 waiting room.

Once in the treatment room, the patient will be hooked up to intravenous (IV) fluids and monitors for blood pressure, oxygen level, heartbeat (electrocardiogram), and electric brain activity (electroencephalogram).



- 1 Stimulant electrodes
- 2 ECT device
- 3 Recording
- 4 Recording EEG
- 5 Ground
- 6 Blood pressure cuff
- 7 EMG (records electrical activity from muscles)
- 8 To oximetre (blood-oxygen monitor)
- 9 Intravenous line (sedative, muscle relaxant)
- 10 ECG (heart rate)

"I believe that ECT treatment has been a key factor in my recovery. It has helped me get my life back!"

- PRHC ECT Patient