



What to do on treatment day?

- Enter the **Main Entrance** on Level 1.
- Report to **Registration**, located to the left of the Welcome Desk.
- After you have registered report to the **Clinics** area, located to the right of the Welcome Desk.
- A staff member will escort you from the Clinics waiting room to the treatment room.

What happens during treatment?

- Two electrodes are placed on the surface of the scalp.
- You will be given an intravenous line and a short-acting general anaesthetic. Once you are asleep you will be given a muscle relaxant.
- A small, controlled electric current is then passed between the electrodes and through part of your brain.
- The electric stimulation to your brain causes a convulsion, usually lasting 20 to 90 seconds. The convulsion is controlled by the muscle relaxant.



What happens after treatment?

- You will be moved to a recovery area where your pulse and blood pressure will be monitored until you are fully awake.
- You can expect to stay at PCH for up to four hours after treatment. A responsible adult must accompany you home and stay with you for the remainder of the day.
- You may experience drowsiness, headaches or nausea. These symptoms typically subside after you eat.
- Treatment does not have an immediate effect. Do not be worried if you do not feel better after the first few treatments.
- Discuss any progress with your doctor.

Important reminders

- It is important for you to understand what is involved in receiving ECT before consenting to treatment.
- If you have questions, contact your referring physician.

This material is available in French and accessible formats upon request to the Communications Department.

Cet outil est disponible en français ou en support accessible sur demande au Service des Communications.

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Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)



This brochure provides answers to some of the questions you may have when considering or receiving Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT).

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What is Electroconvulsive Therapy?

- ③ ECT is a physical therapy in which a patient under general anaesthetic will have an electric current passed through their brain.
- ③ ECT is used to treat some mental illnesses (e.g. depression, schizophrenia) when patients have symptoms that have not responded to medication, counselling or other treatments.

When and where do treatments take place?

- ③ Treatments take place three days a week (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays) in the outpatient clinic at Providence Care Hospital.

How long are treatments?

- ③ Each treatment lasts approximately 15 minutes followed by a period of recovery.

About ECT treatment

How many treatments are required?

- ③ The number of treatments varies from person to person; however, it is common to have between six and twelve treatments.
- ③ Your doctor will determine the number of treatments that you require according to your symptoms.

What are the side effects?

- ③ Memory loss is the most common side effect. Recovery from that memory loss begins a few weeks after treatment and is usually complete after six months.
- ③ Difficulty learning and remembering new information for a short period of time following treatment.
- ③ Permanent loss of memory for details of some events, particularly those which occurred before or during the week of treatment; however, very few patients report severe memory problems that last months or years.
- ③ Although very rare, there is a risk of death (between two and four for every 73, 440 treatments) for those given a general anaesthetic.
- ③ Also rare with modern ECT are bone fractures, broken teeth or spontaneous seizures which may occur sometime after treatment.

Is it painful?

- ③ No, each treatment is given while you are under general anaesthesia.

What are the benefits?

- ③ Potential recovery from the symptoms of the illness.
- ③ Your doctor will determine the number of treatments that you require according to your symptoms.

What should I know before treatment?

- ③ Do not eat or drink after midnight prior to treatment. Do not drink any alcoholic beverages 24 hours before or after treatment.
- ③ Do not take medications that you normally take in the morning unless directed by your doctor, and only with a small amount of water.
- ③ Do not smoke one hour before or after treatment.
- ③ Wash hair the night before.
- ③ Remove makeup, hair pins, nail polish, jewelry, dentures or contact lenses prior to treatment.