

What to
Expect in the
**Epilepsy
Monitoring
Unit (EMU)**



Having seizures isn't easy, especially if you are unsure when the next one is going to happen, but there are ways to figure out what is causing the seizures.

Your doctor or healthcare team may recommend an Epilepsy Monitoring Unit, often called the EMU, for additional testing to see if it is epilepsy, if the seizures have changed, or to gain more information to find the right treatment. The great thing about the EMU is that it is a safe place to monitor seizures, where you have the right equipment and the right team by your side.



TIP

While in the EMU, keep track of how you feel before or after a seizure occurs. Share this information with your doctor during your stay.

What is your healthcare team hoping to find?

Throughout the testing process, your healthcare team is hoping to find out what is causing the seizures. They may also be able to tell where the seizures are occurring, and if something is specifically causing them. This will help your doctor recommend a treatment plan that is personalized to the specific type of seizures that are happening.

How long is the monitoring process?

Monitoring may be anywhere from a few days or longer. Your healthcare team will determine how long monitoring is needed. The exact length of time will be different for each person, depending on how much information they are able to gather and if any additional tests are needed. During this time, your doctor and healthcare team will help to determine treatment options for you.

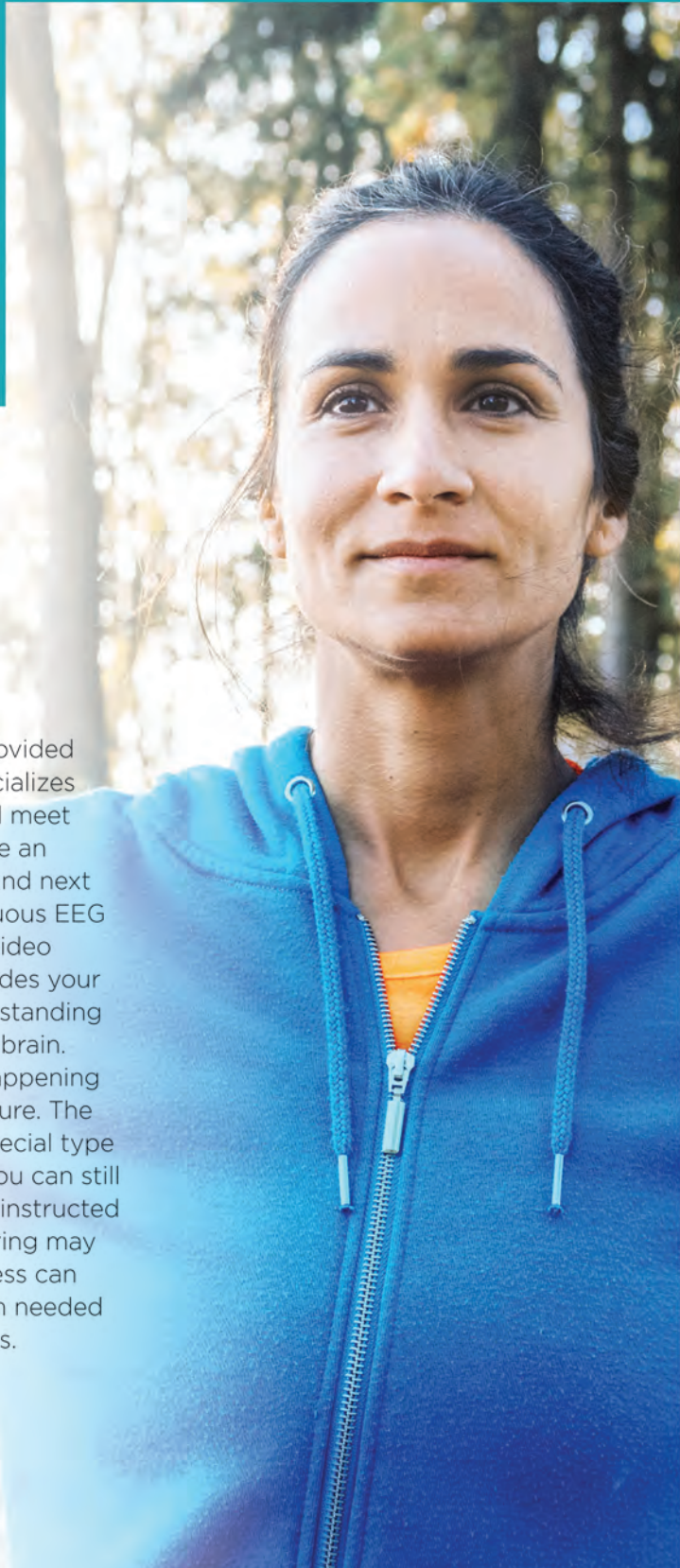


TIP

Try to remain positive throughout this experience. Remember, this is a step in the right direction to help you get the right care.

What happens in the EMU?

Ongoing monitoring will be provided by a healthcare team that specializes in seizures. An EMU doctor will meet with you every day and provide an update regarding monitoring and next steps. The EMU utilizes continuous EEG (electroencephalogram) and Video EEG monitoring. An EEG provides your healthcare team with an understanding as to what is happening in the brain. Video EEG captures what is happening before, during, and after a seizure. The EEG will be attached with a special type of glue—it can't get wet, but you can still move throughout the room as instructed by nursing staff. While monitoring may feel awkward at first, the process can help to provide the information needed to determine treatment options.





A complete workup may be done

- A complete workup may include advanced imaging and other tests



Your healthcare team may use tactics to trigger seizures in a controlled and safe environment

- By causing seizures, they can try to determine where seizures are coming from
- They may encourage exercise, show flashing lights, interrupt sleep, or require heavy breathing to help trigger seizures
- They may reduce or stop medication
 - Medication should not be stopped unless instructed by your healthcare team



A button may be used to let your healthcare team know when a seizure is about to happen

- If you are unable to press the button before a seizure occurs, the video and nurse monitoring will help alert your healthcare team of the seizure
- If you are a caregiver, you can help by pressing a button if you see that a seizure is about to come on and if they are unable to press the button on their own
- If there is a feeling of a seizure, it is always better to press the button to be safe, even if unsure

Additional Information

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CAREGIVER TIP

Make sure a follow-up appointment is scheduled with the doctor so they can review the results of the tests and check medications and progress.

Tips for Your Stay



Stress

As odd as it sounds, bringing items that are stressful, such as work, may actually be a good thing in the EMU. Stress may trigger seizures, which can help your healthcare team get the information they need faster.



Medication

Bring a complete list of all medications. In some cases, you may be asked to bring your medication with you in the original pill bottle.



Entertainment

In many cases, you will be asked to bring something to help you stay busy. Some of these items may include books, magazines, and cards.



Support

For company and support, a family member or guardian is usually allowed to stay in the room during monitoring.