

EMU (epilepsy monitoring unit)

This information is about our EMU. Hospitalization can be very stressful. We hope this will answer some of the questions you may have about your stay in the hospital. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to make this stay as pleasant as possible.

The Cook Children's EMU is an inpatient unit on the 4th floor. It contains special digital equipment that monitors and evaluates brain waves in patients of all ages. This evaluation helps our doctors diagnose and treat seizures or spells.

Most of our patients admitted to the EMU have seizures that are difficult to diagnose and/or manage. EMU uses tests and equipment that help us identify the type, frequency, and source of these seizures. Patients considering having seizure surgery may also be admitted to the EMU.

Patients are monitored 24 hours a day. Because each family is different, identifying the special needs of your family is very important. This helps us decide the best treatment plan for your seizures.

EPILEPSY CENTER TEAM

A specially trained team of epileptologists, neuropsychologists, neurologists, neurosurgeons, nurses, EEG technologists, child life workers, ketogenic dieticians, and social workers make up the EMU team.

EMU ADMISSION

Before admission, you must have an appointment with a Cook Children's neurology physician. Your neurologist explains the best treatment plan and decides if hospitalization is necessary.

Once the decision is made, we schedule your admission. **NOTE:** DO NOT STOP giving any of your child's seizure medicines unless your doctor tells you to stop.

DAY OF ADMISSION

The day before admission you receive a telephone call from the EMU explaining what time to arrive at the hospital. If you do not receive this phone call by 6 pm the day before admission, please call **(682) 885-4643** to check on your arrival time.

If your admission is Monday through Friday, please go to the registration desk located on the 1st floor of the main hospital. If your admission is on a Saturday, Sunday, or a holiday, please go to the Emergency Room registration desk.

The registration desk assigns you a room number and shows you to this room.

- You meet your nurse and we tell you all about the EMU. Your questions very important to us.
- The length of stay in EMU is different for each patient. Your doctor decides how long is necessary based on your seizure or spell type, frequency of seizures, medicines, and availability of other tests ordered.

WHAT TO BRING TO THE EMU

- All medicines: Your nurse needs to see all of your medicines. Please bring everything you take, including herbal and over-the-counter medicines.
- Tops or pajamas: Bring the kind that zips or buttons up the front. Shirts cannot be pulled over your head when you're connected to an EEG.
- Personal grooming: Items such as a toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, brush, etc.
- Games: Also books, crafts, or favorite movies. A television and VCR/DVD is in your room. The Bomar Library is available for borrowing books or videos.
- Special Items: Toys, blankets, pillows, etc. that comfort your child.

DURING YOUR STAY

Medication Change: During an EMU hospitalization it is sometimes necessary to watch a seizure taking place. To do this we may need to stop or change your seizure medicines so that seizures will occur.

Your doctor and nurse *always* talk to you BEFORE any changes are made. We know this can be stressful, so please tell your doctor and nurse about any worries you may have.

Numbing Cream Before Starting IV

Most patients in the EMU have an IV. An IV is a very small plastic tube that goes into your vein. The IV is the fastest way to give rescue seizure medicines.

Before starting an IV, a special numbing cream is placed on the skin. This cream takes the "ouch" out of the IV stick. In fact most patients tell us that starting the IV doesn't hurt. We also use this special cream before drawing blood for lab tests.

Monitoring:

In the EMU we record and study all seizures or spells. This helps us find the right diagnosis so treatment can begin. Small electrodes are placed on your scalp and connected to a video EEG machine. This records brain waves. During your stay in the EMU we also record video pictures and sounds

Overhead lights help us get the best video recording. Please remember to keep the overhead lights on when your child is awake. At night when the lights are off, we use an infrared camera that can see through the dark. However, if a seizure occurs at night, please turn the overhead lights on. This helps us get a better video.

Monitoring also includes taking your blood pressure, pulse rate, respiratory rate and temperature. We do this three times each day, even when you're sleeping. The times are 8 AM, 4 PM, and midnight.

When you are connected to an EEG machine, you cannot leave your room. You can however, move around the room but the camera must always see you.

EEG wires should not get wet so you cannot wash your hair or take a shower. Your nurse has special wipes to use for "sponge-bathing".

Members of the Child Life Department provide fun activities. This includes games, books, and all types of crafts.

Video Cameras On

Please remember that your room video and audio cameras are always on. This is very important for recording all seizures, spells, or other unusual activities.

There is complete privacy in the bathroom.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Press the special button in your room if you think a seizure is happening or if you have an aura. An aura is a sign that sometimes happens before a seizure begins. This sends an alarm to the EMU control room and signals the staff.

What To Do:

Microphones are in the room recording your voice. If a seizure starts, talk out loud about what happening. Please tell us what you see and hear. Also tell us if you think this seizure is normal or if it seems different from the usual seizures or spells.

Recording good pictures and descriptions help in making the right diagnosis. Please be very careful to not block the camera's view.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Visiting hours: 9am to 9pm.
- Visitors coming at other times may need to show identification at the Emergency Room desk.
- Each patient may have two visitors at one time.
- According to our hospital policy, no other children, including siblings, can spend the night in the patient's room.

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- **NOTE:** It is important for at least one care giver to stay with the patient at all times. Family members know their children better than anyone else and can give us valuable information about any seizures or spells.

Smoking: No smoking is allowed in the hospital or anywhere on the campus.

Parking: Parents may park for free in the parking garage on Terrell Street. Other family members and friends can park on the street or pay to park in the garage.

Safety: Please follow these guidelines and share them with your visitors.

- No latex balloons are allowed in the hospital. Please remember that balloons in the EMU can get in the way of the camera.
- Always keep all four of the side rails on the bed up at all times.
- We have CPR training on videos that you can watch on TV. We also have CPR training booklets. Tell your nurse if you are interested in learning more.
- All parents must wear an identification wristband. Please keep this on while your child is in the EMU.

Laundry: We have a washer and dryer on the 4th floor for your personal clothing. Please bring your own soap and fabric softener. Pillows, sheets, linens, and towels are available at any time. Let your nurse know if you need these items.

Snacks: Drinks and snacks are for patients only. Coffee and ice are available for family members. Soft drink, snack machines, and a cafeteria are located on the first floor.

Test results: It may take a week after you go home to evaluate your epilepsy testing. The clinic will call you as soon as we get the results.

Sometimes families ask the nurse and EEG technologist for results. Please note that only your doctor can discuss these results with you

My Notes:

These instructions are only general guidelines. Your doctors may give you specific instructions. If you have any questions or concerns, please call your doctor.