

Melatonin and Sleep EEG

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About Melatonin

Melatonin is a naturally occurring substance produced by the brain in the evenings as it gets dark, to prepare the brain for night sleep. Melatonin supplements are available as a tablet and are prescribed for patients with certain sleep disorders, including jet lag. Melatonin is also widely used in the UK to induce sleep in children, during the EEG study.

Melatonin is regarded as a dietary supplement in the USA and is readily available in health food stores and pharmacies. However melatonin does not have a product license in the UK but can be prescribed by a doctor. There is a link to a leaflet from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health explaining why some unlicensed drugs maybe prescribed to children at <http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk/unlicensed-medicines>

How to obtain Melatonin

- The Consultant may have prescribed melatonin when requesting the EEG during your clinic appointment. This should be available in the Neurophysiology department when you arrive for the EEG recording **OR**
- You may have been given the prescription by the Consultant during your clinic appointment. Please take the prescription to the hospital pharmacy and bring the medication with you when you attend the Neurophysiology department for the EEG recording.
- Even if your child has been prescribed melatonin, it is **essential that you also follow the sleep deprivation instructions**, as melatonin may not be effective in inducing sleep, without sleep deprivation. These instructions are provided in your appointment letter.

How Melatonin is given

- You will need to dissolve the tablets in a drink. Water will be available.
- If you prefer to use milk or squash please bring with you.
- You are responsible for giving the medicine in the department and will be advised on timing by the Clinical Physiologist.



Risks

Sleep deprivation can lower the seizure threshold in patients with epilepsy. You should therefore allow your child to catch up on deprived sleep as soon as possible following the test. We would suggest a couple of hours.

After the EEG

We will wake your child at the end of the test. We will remove the electrodes, and clean their hair as much as possible before you go home. Children usually awake quite quickly from the melatonin induced sleep, with less residual sleepiness than other sleep inducing drugs. Melatonin is generally well tolerated with no serious side effects

Contact Details

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Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656.