



Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)

Behavioral Health Treatment

About Electroconvulsive Therapy

Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) is a safe and effective medical procedure that is used to provide rapid relief to individuals suffering with severe symptoms of certain psychiatric illnesses, which include:

- Severe depression Treatment
- resistant depression Severe
- mania
- Psychosis
- Bipolar disorder
- Catatonia
- High suicide risk
- Parkinson's disease
- Other neurological conditions

ECT has greatly advanced over the years and today, more than 70% of patients respond favorably, making it the most effective treatment option for clinical depression. The ECT Program at Hackensack Meridian *Health* Jersey Shore University Medical Center is comprised of an expert clinical team to provide patients with an individualized approach to ensure the best possible outcomes.



Behavioral Health
1945 Route 33
Neptune, NJ 07753
732-643-4407



**Hackensack
Meridian *Health***
Jersey Shore University
Medical Center
HackensackMeridianHealth.org



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Meridian *Health***
Jersey Shore University
Medical Center

About the Procedure

During an ECT session, a small electrical current is sent to the brain to stimulate and help correct imbalances in the brain in the areas that are responsible for sleep, appetite, mood and thought processes.

An ECT treatment series usually consists of 6 to 12 treatments, given up to three times per week. The treating psychiatrist monitors patient response and mood to determine the exact number of treatments that are best suited for each patient.

Prior to the Procedure

Prior to the procedure, our team will consult with a patient's primary care physician to assess a patient's medical condition to ensure that they are a qualified candidate. The physician will examine and review their medical history and perform blood tests and an electrocardiogram (EKG) to check their heart condition. These tests will also help the doctor make sure that there is no other medical problem causing a patient's psychiatric symptoms.

Prior to scheduling an ECT session, the treating psychiatrist will meet with the patient for initial consultation and individualized treatment planning.

Preparing for the Procedure

Patients should not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before treatment. In addition, patients should arrange for transportation as it is recommended that the patient not drive on the day of each ECT treatment.

During the Procedure

Generally, the ECT procedure takes about 10 to 15 minutes, with added time for preparation and recover. It may be performed as part of an inpatient hospitalization or an outpatient procedure.

Patients will be asleep during the treatment and will be closely monitored throughout the procedure by an ECT physician, a board certified anesthesiologist and a specially trained Registered Nurse.

Patients who undergo ECT experience no pain or discomfort during the procedure as it is administered under general anesthesia. The procedures are conducted in a safe and controlled setting and specifically tailored to meet individual patient needs. This allows for the achievement of maximum benefits with the fewest possible risks.

As with all medical treatments, there are potential side effects that some patients may experience. These may include minor headaches, nausea, muscle aches, jaw pain and temporary memory loss. If experienced, these can usually be treated with common medications and generally resolve within a short period of time.

After the Procedure

Some patients begin to feel better after two to four treatments and experience the full benefit later in the treatment course. ECT is most effective for patients who receive the full course.

Once symptoms resolve, ongoing treatment, known as maintenance therapy, is recommended to prevent a recurrence of symptoms.

Maintenance therapy may include occasional ECT treatments but more often, it includes psychological counseling antidepressants or other medications, or other alternative wellness strategies.

For more information about the ECT service, please call the Hackensack Meridian *Health* Jersey Shore University Medical Center Behavioral Health Department at **732-643-4407**.