

## *Long Term Epilepsy Monitoring Laboratory at Life Entabeni Hospital*

We are pleased that you will soon be coming to the Epilepsy Unit at Life Entabeni Hospital. This pamphlet has been designed to answer questions you may have about the video-EEG monitoring process.

Each of our patients is assigned a nurse to help take care of your admission, discharge, and follow-up appointments. Please call if you have questions that haven't been answered in this brochure.

Here is what you can expect to happen during your stay with us:

### *The Diagnostic Process*

Patients come to the Epilepsy Unit for a variety of reasons. Most have epilepsy that has been hard to manage with drugs. These patients hope that a medication change may reduce their seizure frequency. Or, they hope that surgery may be possible to stop their seizures.

Some patients come because they have seizure-like symptoms. These patients want to know whether they have epilepsy, or if their symptoms are due to some other cause. Sometimes patients have non-epileptic seizures that are due to heart or blood vessel disease, or to emotional and stress factors.

You are being admitted for a 24-hour, continuous video-EEG monitoring procedure and other tests to allow our Epilepsy Monitoring Team to make recommendations about your treatment. Patients generally spend 5 days in the hospital to complete this testing process.

### *Pre-authorisation*

A pre-authorisation number must be obtained from your medical aid **PRIOR** to your admission; the procedure code is 6010 using the ICD-10 code G40.9 (unless otherwise stipulated). Remember to have your referring doctor's practice number on hand before you call your medical aid. Occasionally your medical aid will request a letter of motivation from your doctor so it is strongly advised that you contact them at least 2 weeks prior to your date of admission. Should you require assistance, feel free to contact our pre-admission clinic on 031-2041300 ext 346.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Patients on the following medical aid schemes will **always** be required to submit a letter of motivation from your referring doctor.

**Gems, Bestmed, Bonitas, Libery, Resolution, Allcare, SANDF, CAMAF, Sedmed, Cape Medical plan**

Please ensure that this letter is obtained ASAP. I suggest that you send off this letter personally and not leave it up to the doctor's rooms.

***SIZWE MEDICAL AID DOES NOT COVER THIS PROCEDURE. IF YOU ARE ON THIS MEDICAL AID KINDLY DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH ME SO THAT I CAN MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS.***

## *Reporting to the Admitting Office*

On the morning of your admission, you will first report to the Admitting Desk, which is located at the entrance to Life Entabeni Hospital. You will go through standard admission procedures and will be sent to the Neurology Ward where they will fill in the necessary documentation and give you an ID band.

## *The EEG-Video Monitoring Procedure*

You are going to be on continuous video monitoring during your admission, except when in the bathroom. The camera recording your seizure events is connected to a computer that records your brain waves. To obtain this important information, small metal electrodes filled with gel will be attached to your scalp with glue and gauze. Wires from the electrodes are plugged into a transmitter, worn in a plastic pouch around your neck. Often, *very* fine, thin wires will be inserted below your cheekbones. These wires are called sphenoidal (sfee-noy-dal) electrodes. They record brain waves from the underside of your brain (this is not painful).

This technology allows us to observe and record your seizures and your responses to them. It tells us if your seizures are coming from a specific location in the brain. Because we need to observe several seizures, your doctor may lower or stop your anticonvulsant medication. By adjusting your medication, we hope to increase the number of seizures you have while on the monitor.

Once all the information is at hand at the end of the monitoring procedure, it should make it possible for us to make a very accurate diagnosis regarding the type of epilepsy you have. This might lead to a change in your medication or add other treatment options, which will hopefully control your epilepsy better.

## *Allergies and Skin Irritation*

We do everything possible to keep you comfortable. However, some patients have allergies to the materials we use. Please let us know immediately if you are allergic to iodine soap, local anesthetics (the kind used during dental work), latex (rubber), metal, or adhesive tape. It is important to report any skin irritation from the gel electrodes immediately.

Occasionally, swelling or slight bleeding occurs where the sphenoidal electrodes have been inserted. You may also have some discomfort with chewing or talking, but that rarely lasts more than a day. Please tell your nurse if you are feeling uncomfortable in any way.

## *Help Us Help You*

There are several things you can do to help us make your stay successful and comfortable:

- With electrodes on your scalp, it's not possible to shampoo daily. However you will be able to shower with the help of your nurse and if you could arrive with clean hair, **free of ANY styling products, braids or hair extensions** it would help us a great deal.
- Because of the need to be on camera throughout your stay (except when using the bathroom), some patients find it confining not to be able to move about as freely as they wish. But if we do not record you, we cannot get the information we need to help you. Your stay can be a good time for catching up on reading, watching TV and movies, writing letters, enjoying calls and visits from friends, and working on hobbies that can easily be done in bed.

## *Nursing Care and Seizures*

Please come prepared to discuss your medical history with the nurse during admission. It is important that you bring a list of all your medications, how much of each you take, and how often. Bring with you all your current medications. Our pharmacy will dispense any other medications you need during your stay. Also bring any x-rays which we may need to see.

The hospital is a safe place to have seizures because our nurses are specially trained and are here 24 hours a day to help you. They will do everything they can to make your environment safe and to protect you from injury. We make two specific safety precautions throughout your stay: (1) the guard rails of your bed are kept up at ALL times; (2) a nurse must stand by anytime you are out of your bed.

Our nurses will ask you to report all seizures, auras or seizure warnings that you have. They will show you how to use the seizure alarm located next to your bed. Any time you feel a seizure coming on, you will press the alarm to alert the nurses. They will be on hand to help whenever you need assistance.

### *What to bring*

Now that you have a sense of what's going to be happening while you're in the hospital, you are probably wondering what to bring with you. Here are our suggestions:

1. Casual and comfortable clothes such as jeans, sweatpants, button-down shirts or shirts with large necks, pajamas, robe, underwear, and slippers. There are no laundry facilities for patient use. Please bring enough clothing changes for the length of your stay.
2. Personal hygiene articles such as shampoo and conditioner, deodorant, toothbrush and toothpaste. Please also bring along fine toothed comb.
3. Magazines, books, crossword puzzles, handicrafts, stationery, and games that can easily be used while in bed. (cell phones and laptops are allowed)
4. Snack items such as fruit or drinks. A small refrigerator in the communal kitchen is provided for patient use.
5. **Bring all relevant MRI's and CT brain scans.**

### *General Information*

**Please leave anything of value at home. Entabeni Hospital will not be responsible for theft or loss of personal property.**

- Visiting hours are 8 am to 10 pm.
- A color TV and DVD machine is available in your room. Please bring your own DVD's.
- You cannot smoke in your room during your stay here. If you like, your doctor can order nicotine patches.

## *Getting Results of Your Tests*

Your doctor will give you preliminary results before you leave the hospital, but a complete report will be available on your follow-up appointment with your doctor which should be booked for **2 weeks after you leave the unit**. The Epilepsy Monitoring Team carefully reviews each patient's test results. We want your evaluation to be as thorough as possible so that we can decide on the best course of treatment.

## *Your admission date*

Although every effort is made to ensure that your booking date is kept as is, on the odd occasion the patient booked before you may need to have their stay extended which will result in a short delay regarding your admission date. There are various reasons why this may happen, the most common being that the patient has not had enough seizures for us to make a decision on their treatment. Only once we have collected enough information on their problem, can the patient be discharged. These rules will also apply to you, so ultimately the person who is currently occupying the bed takes preference. Should this be the case, you will be informed at least 24 to 48 hours in advance. Your patience will be much appreciated.

**PLEASE BE ADMITTED BY 8AM THE MORNING OF YOUR APPOINTMENT UNLESS OTHERWISE ARRANGED.**

## *Inquiries*

Contact Candice Böttcher on the following numbers:

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2009-01-10