

## Privacy and Confidentiality

All patient information is confidential. The health record remains the property of Hollywood Private Hospital.

Hollywood Private Hospital must comply with the Ramsay Health Care Privacy Policy and the Privacy Act 1988 in its dealings of an individual's personal information. The privacy policy is available to patients and visitors.

Please speak to one of our staff should you wish to obtain a copy. For further information, please contact the Privacy Officer on (08) 9346 6224.

## For further information contact:

### The ECT Program Coordinator

The Hollywood Clinic

Hollywood Private Hospital

Monash Avenue, Nedlands WA 6009

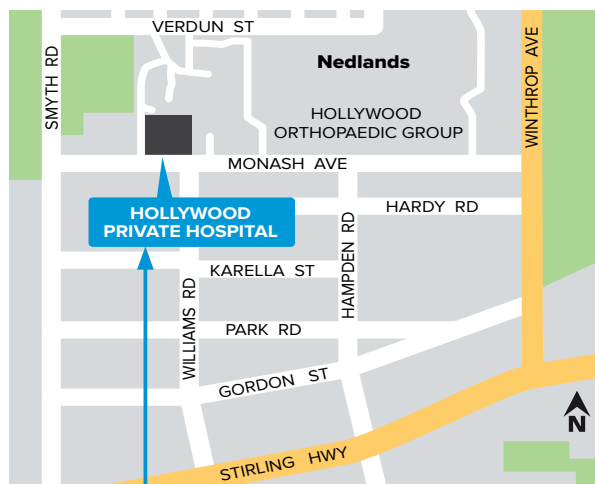
Telephone (08) 9346 6801

Fax (08) 9346 6829

Monday to Friday between 8.00am and 5.00pm

## What is ECT?

Electro Convulsive Therapy (ECT) is a treatment for severe episodes of major depression, mania and some types of schizophrenia. It involves the use of a brief, controlled electrical current to produce a seizure within the brain. This seizure activity is believed to bring about certain biochemical changes that may cause your symptoms to diminish or even disappear. A series of treatments, generally 6 to 12, at a rate of 3 per week, is required although sometimes a smaller or larger number may be necessary.



*The Hollywood Clinic is located here*

A Multi-Storey Car Park is conveniently located opposite The Hollywood Clinic, off Entrance 5 on Monash Avenue. Please visit [hollywoodprivate.com.au](http://hollywoodprivate.com.au) for detailed parking information and current pricing.



**Hollywood  
Private Hospital**

Part of Ramsay Health Care

Monash Avenue

Nedlands WA 6009

Ph: 08 9346 6000 – Fax: 08 9389 8470

[hollywoodprivate.com.au](http://hollywoodprivate.com.au)



The Hollywood  
Clinic

Electro Convulsive  
Therapy



**Hollywood  
Private Hospital**

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# Electro Convulsive Therapy

## How is ECT Administered?

In most cases, ECT is prescribed to be given 3 times each week. Before ECT, you will need to fast (not eat or drink) from midnight the night before each treatment. However you may have a glass of clear fluid such as water up to two hours before treatment.

ECT treatment is given in a dedicated procedure room. The nurse caring for you will bring you into the room where you will be asked to lie down on the bed and to make yourself comfortable.

The doctor/nurses will check your identity with you and check that you understand what treatment you will be having and that you are happy to go ahead with the treatment (i.e. that you consent to treatment). Remember that you can withdraw your consent for treatment at any point, and if you do this, you will not be given treatment on that day. This will not impact on any other treatment you may be receiving.

The staff will put a blood pressure cuff on your arm and monitoring leads will be attached at various points on your body so that your blood pressure, breathing and pulse can be monitored throughout the treatment. You will be given oxygen to breathe through a small mask.

In addition, a small cannula (needle) will be put into a vein in your arm so that the anaesthetic medications to relax your muscles during treatment can be given.

Once you are asleep and relaxed, a controlled electrical stimulus (ECT) will be given and this will trigger a seizure within the brain. This typically lasts for about one minute. Because of the medications, there is very little body movement during the seizure, and you will be monitored throughout the procedure by experienced doctors and nurses.

Once you have recovered and are breathing well, you will be moved to a recovery bed, and cared for by the nursing team. In 5-10 minutes you will wake up completely, but may feel a little sleepy because of the medications and your treatment.

Once you are fully awake and feeling well enough, you will be taken to have some breakfast and a drink to help your recovery further.

If you are a day patient, you can generally go home about two hours after treatment. You must not drive for 24 hours after treatment, so you will need a member of your family or a friend to collect you.

## Is ECT Effective?

ECT is an effective and safe treatment, and can often offer fast results for patients where other treatments (such as medications) have not helped. Your doctor will talk with you (and your family if you choose to have them involved) about why ECT is the recommended treatment for you. He/she will also explain what alternative treatments may be available.

Although there is no guarantee with any treatment, ECT appears to be most effective in major depression, where up to 80% of patients report positive effects.

## Is ECT Safe?

It is important to note that all treatments have risks and side effects (including choosing to have no treatment at all). Careful preparations are undertaken before ECT is given to minimise any risks, including having a medical and psychiatric evaluation. Your medications may also be adjusted.

For most patients the side effects of ECT are relatively minor and your doctor will discuss this in more detail with you. Serious complications are rare, and every care is taken to prevent these from happening, but they can include heart issues, reactions to the medications given at the time of treatment injuries to muscles or bones, and prolonged seizures.

The more common side effects are headaches, muscle soreness and nausea. These are usually mild and can generally be managed with simple medications. Memory problems or some confusion can also be a side effect and the impact of this varies between individual patients. Memory problems can build up over the course of treatment, but typically this goes away after the treatment is completed. Because of this, important life decisions should be postponed until any effects on memory have ceased.

Many patients who have struggled with their memory because of their depression report an improvement in memory overall. Memory problems can be related to remembering new information or remembering things from the past – particularly the recent past.

For most patients, memory returns to its usual level over a period of days to weeks after completing the course of ECT, however some memories from the recent past may be delayed in recovery, or even permanently lost.

It is important to note that in surveys, most patients report that they are not greatly disturbed by memory effects and would have ECT again if their doctor recommended this treatment.

## Consent for ECT

As with other medical procedures, you will be asked to provide written consent to undergo this treatment.

Your doctor will talk to you about the treatment and you give a chance to ask questions. It is important that you have an opportunity to read about the treatment and talk to people about your decision.

Your family/carer can be involved in the discussion about ECT if you want them to be. Each time you have treatment, you will be asked again verbally if you consent (agree) to treatment. If you do not agree, you will not be given treatment.

## Other Information about ECT

Your doctor and the nursing staff are here to answer any questions you may have about ECT.

There is a DVD about ECT you can watch, and your family/carer can watch it with you. Following this, please ask any questions you have about any aspect of treatment.

There is also information on websites you may want to look at, for example [chiefpsychiatrist.wa.gov.au](http://chiefpsychiatrist.wa.gov.au) or [Ranzcp.org](http://Ranzcp.org)

We acknowledge that coming to hospital for any treatment or procedure can be distressing and may cause some anxiety. Please feel free at any time to ask any questions that you may have regarding the service.