Thank you for choosing the Duke Epilepsy Center for your child’s care. We have been privileged to care for children and adults with epilepsy since 1982. This brochure is designed to provide helpful information about your child’s upcoming stay in our Pediatric Epilepsy Monitoring Unit (EMU).

The EMU rooms are located in Duke University Hospital on the intermediate care floors for pediatrics (Unit 5100). Each EMU room is uniquely equipped to provide round-the-clock monitoring using video cameras and electroencephalography (EEG) to record brain activity, body movements, and sound. This monitoring provides information to your child’s epileptologist so they can diagnose your child’s events accurately and design the best possible treatment plan.

Each patient’s length of stay depends on the amount of information needed by the epileptologist and can vary from three to seven days. Patients are not permitted to leave their rooms unless additional tests are required or they are scheduled for time in the playroom. It is of vital importance to have a responsible adult familiar with your child’s events present at all times during your child’s stay.

EMU Staff
Your child will be cared for by a number of different staff in the EMU:

**Epileptologists:** Board-certified neurologists with subspecialty training in epilepsy are in charge of your child’s medical care within the EMU. They will order medications and interpret the EEG results on a daily basis. These physicians usually cover the EMU on a four-week rotation. The epileptologist on duty is always in close contact with your child’s physician.

**Neurology residents and interns:** Physicians in specialized neurology training as well as recently graduated doctors will participate in your child’s care on a daily basis.

**Nurse clinicians:** Nurse clinicians in the pediatric EMU are specially trained in the care of those with epilepsy.

**Registered nurses:** Nurses specializing in neurological care will have primary responsibility for your child’s daily care.

**Child life specialist:** Professionally trained and certified members of the health care team, child life specialists provide educational and emotional support for children of all ages. Child life specialists are available to offer suggestions on ways to help your child through unfamiliar, frightening, or invasive medical procedures.

**EEG technologists:** EEG technologists are responsible for obtaining accurate recordings and videos. They will be involved in your child’s care by maintaining your child’s electrodes and equipment to assure quality data-gathering.

**Other staff as needed:** A patient resource manager, dietitian, physical therapist, occupational therapist, social worker, stress therapist, and hospital chaplain are also available during your child’s stay in the EMU.

Admission to the EMU
The admission process begins with an outpatient clinic visit with one of our epileptologists or neurologists. This physician will determine if admission to the EMU is needed to define whether your child’s events are due to epilepsy or other causes.

If admission is needed, you will be notified of the admission date well in advance by your child’s physician’s office. If you are not given a check-in time in advance, you will receive a phone call the morning of admission telling you when to arrive. Check in at admissions on the first floor of Duke University Hospital. You will be shown to your child’s room or escorted to the Epilepsy Control Room by an EEG technologist.

Upon admission, your child will have electrodes applied to his or
discontinued until data-gathering is complete. You will be informed daily of your child’s medication changes.

An IV line will be placed in case rescue medications are needed. The IV team is specially trained and equipped to meet the needs of our young population.

EMU Rooms
Each private EMU room has a private bathroom and is furnished with an oversized chair that folds out into a single bed for your child’s observer to sleep on. Each room also has either a rocking chair or a straight-back chair. Fire codes do not allow for additional seating.

Children are encouraged to bring their favorite toys, blankets, pillows, books, pacifiers, pictures, and other items that will make their room feel more like home.

Each EMU room also has a small refrigerator and you are encouraged to bring snacks and drinks with you since only typical hospital-type snacks will be provided. Your child’s observer will be provided three meals per day, paid for by the Epilepsy Center. An adult must remain with your child at all times.

The monitored patient can only shower from the waist down and must be accompanied during the shower. Otherwise, a sponge bath in your child’s room—off-camera of course—is permissible.

Things you can do to prepare for your child’s admission:

- Give your child a shower or bath and wash their hair the night before or morning of admission. Hair should be clean with no hair products such as gels, sprays, mousse, or hair weaves. It is not necessary to cut your child’s hair or shave their head.
- Do not stop your child’s medications unless you have been told to by your child’s physician. Bring all of your child’s medication with you, including any over-the-counter supplements they may take. Some medications and brand-name drugs are not available at Duke. The nurse will place the medication in your child’s medication drawer for administration.
- Bring a complete list of medical and surgical history.
- Bring your child’s seizure diary.
- Dress your child in comfortable clothing or pajamas. Button-down shirts and elastic-waist pants are advisable. Rubber-soled slippers or sneakers should be worn when up and about the room.
Activities for Patients and Families

Music therapy, pet therapy, and special entertainers are among the ways we work to brighten your child’s experience during his or her hospital stay. Activities, toys, and movies are available for children to enjoy at their bedside. Please ask your child life specialist about getting some things from the playroom for your child. Child life volunteers are available during regular playroom hours to bring activities to the room or spend time with your child.

The playroom is available by appointment and requires permission from your child’s epileptologist. Parent observers may take a break while the patient is in the playroom.

Each room has a television with local and limited cable channels, a remote control, VHS/DVD player, PlayStation 2, radio, and telephone with a direct-dialed number, and the entire hospital has Wi-Fi. Long-distance calls may only be made collect or charged to a calling card.

You are encouraged to bring in different items to pass the time. Puzzles, books, card or board games, magazines, crafts, or hobbies done while seated are welcome. Hand-held computer games, movies, and music are other ways your child may enjoy passing the time. Computers and electronics must be on a table in front of your child and not on their lap due to electrical interference on the EEG recording. Child life specialists are also available to provide activities and emotional support for procedures.

Discharge from the EMU

Once your child’s epileptologist has gathered enough data, medications will be restarted. The epileptologist will discuss the findings of your child’s stay with you prior to discharge, including any changes to your child’s medications and whether further tests are necessary.

Discharge will usually occur 24 hours after medications are restarted, providing your child has been seizure-free. The EEG may continue until discharge. Discharge usually occurs about 1:00 p.m. Follow-up appointments are generally scheduled prior to discharge.

Ambassador Program

A group of patients who have received similar monitoring in the past are available to speak with you regarding their experience at the Duke Epilepsy Center. If you are interested this program please contact us and we will match you with an ambassador.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child’s care. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Duke Epilepsy Center at 919-681-5363.

IMPORTANT POINTS

- A responsible adult familiar with your child’s events must stay with your child at all times
- Bring all of your child’s medications and seizure diary
- Bring snacks and drinks for yourself
- Other children cannot stay in the room
- Smoking is not allowed at Duke University Hospital
- Bring activities for your child
- Clothing for your child should be comfortable and preferably have buttons