Patient Instructions
Epilepsy Monitoring Unit (EMU)

What is an EMU?
The EMU or Epilepsy Monitoring Unit is a hospital unit where patients are monitored 24 hours a day to allow our physicians to refine a diagnosis and respond in real time to a patient’s seizures. During your stay, which can last from 4-7 days, a patient’s brain waves will be recorded continuously.

How do I prepare?

1. You can arrange to have a relative stay with you but it is not required.
2. Do not stop your seizure medications before coming in for monitoring, unless your doctor specifically advises you to do so.
3. What should I pack for my stay?
   - If you don’t want to wear a hospital gown, bring loose-fitting bottoms and a top that buttons. You will want at least 3 changes of clothes with button-up tops.
   - Toiletries are provided but if you prefer certain soaps or toothpastes, pack those, too. You may also want to bring reading materials, puzzles, tablets, and other activities.
4. Your hair should be clean and free of hair spray, oil, lotion, tonic, or hair weave when you arrive. If you have no objection to cutting your hair, you are encouraged to do so, but this is not a requirement.
5. If you have a DBS or VNS device, bring your magnet.
6. Bring a loose-fitting hat for your discharge as you will not be able to shower until the EEG is disconnected on the final day.
What should I expect during my stay in the EMU?

You will be monitored continuously 24 hours per day with a video camera, while your brain waves are recorded with EEG.

You can spend your time in the hospital bed or sit in a chair based on a "symptoms and fall" assessment.

Walking around your room is permitted with assistance and precautions to prevent falls from a seizure.

During monitoring, the team performs a variety of evaluations of your medical condition as well as stress factors and mood changes that commonly accompany severe seizures.

If episodes do not occur spontaneously, the team may try to induce them with medication reduction, sleep deprivation, exercise, flashing lights, hyperventilation (over-breathing), hypnosis, or any maneuvers that tend to bring on your seizures.

Seizure medications may be tapered in the hospital to cause seizures for analysis under highly-controlled conditions.

The EEG cable reaches into the bathroom where you have off-camera privacy.

About 1 in 5 people undergo video-EEG monitoring with no episodes. However, some of these individuals have EEG abnormalities picked up by the recording devices, which helps with diagnosis. A few people may experience a stay that does not lead to a diagnosis.
Location and Parking

Please arrive 15 minutes prior to your scheduled admission at guest services on the first floor of the Zale Lipshy Pavilion - William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital to sign admission paperwork. You will then be directed to the 7th floor Epilepsy Monitoring Unit.