

Before the Study

What is a sleep study and Maintenance of Wakefulness Test (MWT)?

For most patients, a sleep study is a key diagnostic component of a sleep disorder evaluation. A sleep study, also called a polysomnogram (PSG), measures your brain wave activity, eye movements, muscle contractions, heart activity, breathing and blood oxygenation during sleep.

The Maintenance of Wakefulness Test (MWT) is a way to evaluate the ability to stay awake during the day. There are 4 tests spaced 2 hours apart. After being asked to stay awake, sensors on the head and chest record your brain wave activity, eye movements, muscle contractions, and heart activity to accurately detect if you fall asleep.

The information we collect during your study is reviewed and analyzed by our sleep specialists.

What information will I get ahead of time?

Once you have scheduled your sleep study, you will receive a welcome package either in the mail or via email containing forms you need to complete, along with directions and phone numbers to the facility. Be sure to bring the directions, phone number, completed forms and your health insurance card on the night/day of your study.

Will I have a private bedroom?

Yes, sleep study bedrooms are private.

What personal items should I bring?

In addition to 2-piece nightclothes, you will need regular clothes to change into in the morning. The purpose of the test is to see how sleepy you are on a typical day, so you need to wear daytime clothing for your naps. You should also bring something to keep you occupied during the day (videos, reading materials, laptops, etc.), and any toiletries you may need if you would like to shower before you go home.

What about medications?

Please take your medications as usual and bring them to the center, if necessary. Upon arrival at the sleep lab, the technologist will be able to tell you your approximate bedtime so that you may take nighttime medications accordingly. Our staff will not be able to dispense any medication to you.

We also recommend that you discuss with your physician whether your medications will affect the sleep study results.

On the Morning of the MWT

What should I expect on the morning of the study (after your overnight PSG)?

A technologist will remove sensors from your nose, torso, finger and legs. The electrodes on your head, face, and chest will remain on. A daytime technologist will introduce himself or herself to you and explain how the test will proceed. You will be asked to change into daytime clothing. You will also be instructed to stay awake and off the bed in between tests.

Will breakfast and lunch be provided?

We provide a light, complimentary breakfast and lunch if you have not brought it with you. A refrigerator and microwave are available, as well as a hot/cold spring water dispenser. You are welcome to use the kitchen or ask your sleep technologist for assistance.

During the MWT Study**What happens during the MWT?**

The MWT consists of four sleep trials with breaks lasting for two hours in between them. Sometimes you will also do an overnight sleep study the night before the MWT. It is vital that you get a normal amount and quality of sleep the night before the test. If this does not happen, then your test may need to be moved to another day.

The first sleep trial is performed between 1-1/2 and 3 hours after your normal wake-up time. You should have a light breakfast at least one hour before the first trial.

Sensors are placed on your head, face, and chin to monitor when you are asleep and awake during the test. You will not feel any pain during the MWT. The sensors are gently placed on your skin and connected to a computer. The cables are long enough to let you move around in the bed.

For each trial, you will sit quietly in bed with your back and head supported by a pillow and a low light on. It is important that you are as comfortable as you can be. You will be asked to sit still and look directly ahead of you. Then you simply try to stay awake for as long as you can.

You are not allowed to do other things to try and keep yourself awake. This includes actions such as singing or slapping your face. If you fall asleep, then you will be awakened after sleeping for only about 90 seconds. The test will end if you do not fall asleep within 40 minutes.

Between trials, you will have to stay out of bed and occupy yourself so that you remain awake.

Can I have a nap between tests?

It is very important that you do not nap in between the MWT tests, or it will affect the results.

Can I have caffeine?

No caffeine is allowed (coffee, colas, chocolates, etc.) all day.

Can I smoke?

No. Most of our sleep lab facilities are non-smoking campuses due to regulations.

Will I be able to leave the lab between tests?

You need to be monitored by a technologist all day to see that you are not falling asleep between naps. You can move around your room and the entire suite and go outside for short periods.

When will I be ready to leave?

Your testing will be over at approximately 5 p.m.

After the MWT

What happens after my sleep study?

A large amount of information is collected during your sleep study and MWT. A sleep specialist will analyze this information and a formal report with recommendations will be sent to your doctor. The sleep technologists cannot provide you with any information about your testing results.

When will my doctor receive my results?

It usually takes up to two weeks for your doctor to receive your formal report. Please schedule a follow-up visit with your physician after that time to discuss the findings and recommendations for treatment. If you have seen one of our specialists, we will contact you as soon as possible to discuss treatment options.