

# ECT Services (Electroconvulsive Therapy)

BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH SERVICES



**SUBURBAN HOSPITAL** has been a major DC metropolitan area provider of ECT services for more than 25 years.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

about inpatient or outpatient ECT services, please contact:

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**SUBURBAN HOSPITAL**

JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICINE

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**WHAT IS ECT?** | ECT, or Electroconvulsive Therapy, is a treatment option for patients who are diagnosed with a range of serious mental illnesses, especially patients with severe depression. ECT is also sometimes used to treat:

- Mood disorders
- Mania
- Parkinson's disease
- Failure to respond to medication and/or psychotherapy
- Suicidal patients

**ECT TECHNOLOGY** | Our state-of-the-art ECT technology allows treatment with ultra-brief stimulation. Due to the new technology's more gentle effects on memory, we may be able to provide a more sustainable, long-term maintenance treatment.

**INITIAL EVALUATION** | A psychiatric evaluation is performed to determine the appropriateness of ECT treatment. Patients also receive a medical evaluation, including a physical examination, blood tests and an electrocardiogram (EKG) before beginning ECT.

**THE PROCEDURE** | The number of treatments recommended is based on the individual patient's needs and responsiveness to the procedure. Patients come two to three times per week and usually receive between four and twelve treatments per episode of care. The patient is put to sleep with a short-acting anesthetic. A muscle relaxant is then administered, followed by a low-voltage electrical shock to the brain of the patient to cause a seizure. This is theorized to improve the chemical pathways in the brain, permitting an adjustment of nature's neuro-transmitters that affect mood and behavior. The patient is usually fully awake 10 to 20 minutes after falling asleep.

Some patients may have a need for maintenance ECT, as 20 to 50 percent of the people who respond well to a course of ECT may relapse within six months. Therefore, a maintenance treatment of medications and/or ECT might be advisable.

ECT is provided on both an inpatient and outpatient basis. The treatment is administered in Suburban Hospital's 4th floor Minor Procedures Suite.

**POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS** | ECT is considered one of the safest treatment options for medically fragile patients, including the elderly, pregnant women, and patients who have limited tolerance to some psychiatric medications. As with all forms of medical treatment, some patients may experience adverse side effects. There is a potential for memory problems, headache, or confusion in some patients, and in rare cases, death. Other side effects may include muscle soreness, nausea, temporary irregularities in heart rate and, in a few instances, damage to fragile teeth. Some patients prefer to sleep for a few hours following treatment.

**ECT STAFF** | Anca G. Zinnes, MD and David (Ted) George, MD are our ECT psychiatrists. They both are Board Certified Adult Psychiatrists and both completed their ECT Fellowship at Duke University Medical Center. They will coordinate and communicate with patients and the referring physicians regarding goals and progress throughout the course of treatment. With written consent from patients, they can also speak to others, such as family members.

