



UCSF Electroconvulsive Therapy Service

Description and **[Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)**

Thank you for considering UCSF. We appreciate your inquiry.
Here is our webpage: <https://psych.ucsf.edu/ECT>

Introduction

Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is available for people suffering from particular behavioral and emotional disturbances, including some forms of depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. It is most often used in the treatment of severe depression that has not responded to medications and psychotherapy. This treatment is offered through a partnership between Langley Porter Psychiatric Hospital and the UCSF Helen Diller Medical Center at Parnassus Heights.

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1. How does my psychiatrist make a referral to the UCSF ECT SERVICE?

Primary (referring) psychiatrist must be Board-Eligible or Board-Certified

The primary psychiatrist should email ECTService2@ucsf.edu

This is checked by Eric "Ellis" Ellis, ECT Program Coordinator.

Once the psychiatrist contacts us, we will reply with a secure email that requests the following information:

- a. A brief description of the condition, diagnosis, reason for referral, special information
- b. Medication history – a list of medications tried, with dosages and efficacy/side effects, if available. Also, if TMS or ketamine has been tried or considered. (*This is helpful for insurance authorization purposes*)
- c. Results of a Montreal Cognitive Assessment, if done
- d. Contact information, including email and mobile phone number so that we can reach out for information and completion of an [Informed Consent Review](#) (ICR). This link is only for a copy to review in advance. A DocuSign email will be sent and the ICR must be completed prior to ECT and every 30 days thereafter.



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2. What are the administrative steps needed to for an evaluation for ECT?

1. Referral by primary psychiatrist. Primary psychiatrist will continue to treat you and help to manage your care during the ECT course.
2. Initial evaluation by a UCSF ECT psychiatrist
 - We strongly encourage family members to attend this
 - UCSF is a teaching hospital and expect that psychiatric residents and medical students may be involved in your care
3. Pre-op evaluation by UCSF Anesthesia (Pre-Pare clinic).
 - This is scheduled by ECT Program Coordinator, after the initial evaluation.

3. How many treatments will I need? (and what do I need to do to prepare?)

- Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) is a series of 6-15 treatments that occur on a Monday, Wednesday, Friday schedule
- The treatments occur in the morning and take about 3 hours from the time you arrive to the point at which they are discharged home

What do I need to do to prepare?

-At least one day in advance, you will be scheduled with the PrePare clinic for a pre-procedure evaluation by the Department of Peri-Operative Services (Anesthesia). Contact ECT Coordinator who will help arrange this evaluation.

-Plan to arrive at least 1 hour prior to surgery time for check in

-Do not eat or drink after midnight, the day before surgery (except for scheduled medications – okay to take with small sips of water)

-Make sure you adjust medications prior to the ECT (review with the ECT psychiatrist in advance)

***After each ECT treatment, you MUST be picked up by a friend, family member, or responsible adult.**

4. What do the consent forms look like?

These are for your information only:

1. California State mandated form: [CA State consent form for ECT.pdf](#)
2. [UCSF specific form](#)

You don't need to sign the consent forms now. Please note that the State of California mandates that at least 24 hours elapse from the time you discuss ECT with the ECT doctor until the time of the procedure. You will be asked to sign them prior to the procedure. The forms are considered valid for up to 30 days from the date of the procedure that occurs after signing.

5. Is ECT covered by insurance?

Generally, yes. However, not all insurance will cover ECT treatments at UCSF, even if the initial evaluation is covered. We will obtain insurance authorization prior to services and will help direct patients to other covered facilities if we are not



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contracted. Different insurance companies may have preferred contracted ECT centers.

6. What is the role of my referring psychiatrist once I start ECT?

We are a multi-physician service in an academic setting, and we acknowledge that your primary referring psychiatrist may know you (the patient) much better than we do. Therefore, we expect and encourage your psychiatrist to continue to be a co-manager of your care. For example, your psychiatrist should continue to write all the outpatient prescriptions for you (although for prescriptions planned for only the duration of the ECT, we will make exceptions). In addition, your psychiatrist should be the first to respond to acute non-ECT related crises that arise. We strive to have ongoing communication with your psychiatrist to provide the best care possible for you, and your psychiatrist can email or call us with questions or requests for updates.

7. What is UCSF MyChart?

UCSF MyChart is an easy way to access your medical information online. Check lab results, request appointments or referrals, message your health care provider and refill medications -- all free of charge. MyChart uses secure technology, so messages sent to and from your provider are confidential. We strongly encourage all individuals who are getting ECT to sign up for MyChart when they register.

8. Where is ECT conducted?

Outpatient ECT is conducted at the Parnassus Outpatient Surgery Center:
<https://www.ucsfhealth.org/clinics/outpatient-surgery-center-at-paranassus>
The address is: 400 Parnassus Ave, Level B-1, Room A03, with more details [here](#).
Phone number: (415) 353-3130

For certain situations, ECT may be conducted across the street at 505 Parnassus Avenue at the Moffitt-Long Peri-Operative Services, 4th floor.
Phone number: 415-353-1292 (Moffitt Long Post-Anesthesia Care Unit, PACU)

9. Can I drive myself to ECT? Are there ride services?



After ECT, all patients must be discharged into the care of a responsible adult. Patients cannot be sent home by themselves in a taxi or rideshare. Typically, a friend or family member will drop off and pick up the patient. We also have a list of medical transport services that can provide this service. One such service is *Onward*, (QR code for app linked to the left) which you may also call 800-700-4797 or email support@onwardrides.com to schedule your ride. Please note medical transportation can be covered by Flexible Spending Accounts. Please let us know if you are having any issues with transportation.



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10. I live far from San Francisco. Are there short term places to stay?

For short term stays in San Francisco, UCSF maintains this guide:

<https://campuslifeserviceshome.ucsf.edu/housing/short-term-lodging-guide>

Of course, San Francisco has lots of other hotel and Airbnb type options.

11. Where else can I get information about ECT?

Descartes Li talks about ECT, 2022, 5 YouTube videos

1. History and Legal Aspects: <https://youtu.be/KEg9UpEUPKk> (7min)
2. Effectiveness: <https://youtu.be/HqAC-gMAnpQ> (11min)
3. Side Effects: https://youtu.be/_TDhhrn1g2Y (10min)
4. How It Works: <https://youtu.be/LyhqQu9kHQQ> (4min)
5. Overview and Logistics: https://youtu.be/N9MZT_zxRow (9min)

Slides for all the videos: [Slides for ECT Youtube talks](#)

Other resources

Information to patients regarding ECT that we often recommend:

- Website on ECT from the Mayo Clinic:
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/electroconvulsive-therapy/MH00022>
- The Wikipedia webpage on ECT:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electroconvulsive_therapy
- Youtube video from the Department of Veterans Affairs:
https://youtu.be/R1X5xyb_qDE (9min)
- "ECT - Let's Talk About It", an educational video from Australia:
<https://youtu.be/ZYCjz-6iEW4> (16min)
- Video from Covenant Health: <https://youtu.be/sOtpuRNkJBk> (3min)
- Video from Atrium Health: <https://youtu.be/NeBzTr05hCO> (3min)
- *Shock: The Healing Power of Electroconvulsive Therapy* by Larry Tye and Kitty Dukakis (available from Amazon.com, also in DVD)
- Tons of information here: <https://www.covenanthealth.ca/hospitals-care-centres/grey-nuns-community-hospital/mental-health/electro-convulsive-therapy-resources>

12. Would you be willing to be put on a contact list?

This is for after you have completed ECT. From time to time, we receive requests from potential patients who would like to speak with someone who has undergone the procedure. If a request is made, a secure, confidential email will be sent to you at that time. There is no obligation to reply, but if you do reply, you are agreeing for someone to contact you to discuss your experience with ECT.

In addition, we may contact you for opportunities to share your experiences with medical students, who need exposure to the patient experience of ECT and who are learning interviewing skills. This is also strictly confidential.

13. Further Questions? Please feel free to contact us!



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Eric Ellis ("Ellis"), ECT Coordinator, ECTService2@ucsf.edu, 8am – 4pm: 415-476-7848; after-hours: 415-964-7093

Descartes Li, Director, UCSF ECT Program, Descartes.li@ucsf.edu; 415-476-7448

Ramotse Saunders, Associate Director, UCSF ECT Program,
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Hwa Soo Hoang, Associate ECT Physician, UCSF ECT Program,
Hwasoo.Hoang@ucsf.edu



←QR code for this FAQ

Also located here: https://ucsfonline-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/descartes_li_ucsf_edu/EemYCI0cRU5ImkhYgfl4KOIBVW8r_k351N-x0VaoPU9XcQ?e=rcFbTO

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