

What is a sleep study?

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

Can I visit the center before my study?

Yes, tours of the sleep testing laboratory are provided during the day. Please feel free to call us to schedule a daytime tour before your test. We will be happy to accommodate your visit. You are also welcome to take a tour during your scheduled clinic appointment.

What information will I get ahead of time?

Once you have scheduled your sleep study, you will receive a welcome package in the mail 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, photo ID and health insurance card on the night of your study.

What if I have special needs?

Please call our office between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 8 a.m. to noon on Friday to discuss your special needs requirements. We will try to accommodate your needs and answer any questions you may have about the sleep study. If you do not speak English, you will need to bring someone over the age of 18 years old to interpret for the entire night. An interpreter can be provided for you at no charge if arrangements are made in advance.

What should I bring?

Pack as you would for an overnight hospital stay. For the benefit of your privacy and comfort, please bring appropriate and comfortable two-piece nightclothes (such as t-shirts and shorts or pajama top and bottoms). Review the recommended checklist below to ensure that you have everything you might need.

Recommended check list:

- Comfortable nightclothes (two-piece pajamas or t-shirt and shorts)
- Bathrobe and slippers
- Toiletries
- Change of clothes
- Medications
- Reading material
- Hair dryer
- Snacks

What about medications?

Please take the night time medications you can at home and bring other night time medications with you to the Sleep Lab. Any sleep aid medication must be taken in the Sleep Lab. Upon arrival, 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.

Can I wear nail polish?

If you wear nail polish, we may have to remove it from at least one finger to obtain a good signal from the oxygen sensor.

Should I have dinner?

Please eat dinner before arrival. You may bring a snack if you wish. Dinner will not be provided.

Can I have a nap?

It is important that you avoid napping on the day of the study.

Can I have caffeine?

Avoid caffeine (coffee, sodas, chocolates, etc.) after noon on the day of the study.

Can I smoke?

No, our Centers are non-smoking facilities.

Should I take a shower before the study?

You may find that a shower before arriving at the Sleep Lab will make you feel more relaxed. Please remove braids and hair accessories (clips, rubber bands, etc.). Wash and dry your hair and do not apply any sprays, oils, gels, lotions or make-up to your face or body. You may wear deodorant.

What if I am running late?

Please contact the Sleep Lab directly at (256) 265-7080 and let us know of your approximate time of arrival.

During the Study

What happens when I arrive at the Sleep Lab?

The study usually begins in the late evening and ends around 5:30 a.m. Once you arrive, a sleep technologist will welcome you and show you to your private bedroom. The technologist will ask you to fill out forms and answer any questions you may have. As part of your orientation, you may be asked to watch a video that will explain the process.

Will I have a private bedroom?

Yes, sleep study bedrooms are private.

How do I get ready for the study?

After you change into your sleepwear, the sleep technologist will place a number of non-painful sensors (also called electrodes) on your head, chest area and legs. The areas where the sensors will be attached are cleaned and the electrodes are attached with special gels and paste. The gels and paste are harmless, however, if you have sensitive skin, please alert your sleep technologist prior to attaching the electrodes. Elastic belts with sensors will be placed around your chest and abdomen. Airflow sensors will be placed under your nose and a finger clip will be applied to monitor your oxygen levels. All of the sensors will be connected to a small portable box that transmits signals to the sleep monitoring and recording equipment that is in a nearby control room.

Will I be able to sleep with so many things attached to me?

You may find it a bit strange at first, but most people do not find it uncomfortable or an obstacle to falling asleep. We will make every effort to ensure that you are as comfortable as possible. If a problem arises, your sleep technologist will make adjustments. The bedroom has an open intercom that will enable you to communicate with your technologist at any time.

What if I need to go to the bathroom during the study?

If you need to use the bathroom during the night, you can call your sleep technologist on the intercom for assistance. They will temporarily disconnect you from the sleep monitoring equipment.

What happens while I'm sleeping?

The lab is a busy place and there will be other patients being monitored during the same evening. The sleep technologists are in the control room throughout the night analyzing the information being collected while you sleep.

Will I be treated for my sleep disorder while I'm there?

For certain patients with Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA), the sleep study may include the beginning of a treatment called CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure). After you are asleep for a period of time, the sleep technologist will be able to determine if you have evidence of OSA. If you have evidence of OSA, CPAP treatment may be started during the night. During your orientation, this will be thoroughly reviewed, and you will have plenty of time to ask questions.

After the Sleep Study

When will I wake up?

If you are not already awake, you will be awakened between 5:30 a.m. and 6 a.m.

Does the sleep center provide breakfast?

The Sleep Lab provides a grab-n-go or continental breakfast that will usually include coffee, milk, juice, cereal, muffins and granola bars.

When can I leave the sleep center?

You should plan to add an additional 30 minutes to your usual morning preparation time to allow us to remove the electrodes. You may take a shower to wash your hair to remove the gels and paste used to attach the electrodes. If you have long or thick hair, it may take longer to remove the paste. If you need to be somewhere at a certain time, please let us know when you arrive in the center so we can accommodate your request. If you have arranged for a ride, they will need to pick you up by 7 a.m.

What happens if I am scheduled for a nap test?

Your doctor may have ordered an additional test called a Multiple Sleep Latency Test (MSLT) or a Maintenance of Wakefulness Test (MWT) as part of your overall evaluation. This means that you will need to stay at the Center for most of the following day for a series of brief naps. The naps are scheduled throughout the day. Please bring reading materials, puzzles or other entertainment items that will help you pass the time. Lunch and snacks are provided during the day.

What happens after my sleep study?

A large amount of information is collected during your sleep study. A sleep specialist will analyze this information and a formal report with recommendations will be sent to your doctor. On the night of the study, 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.