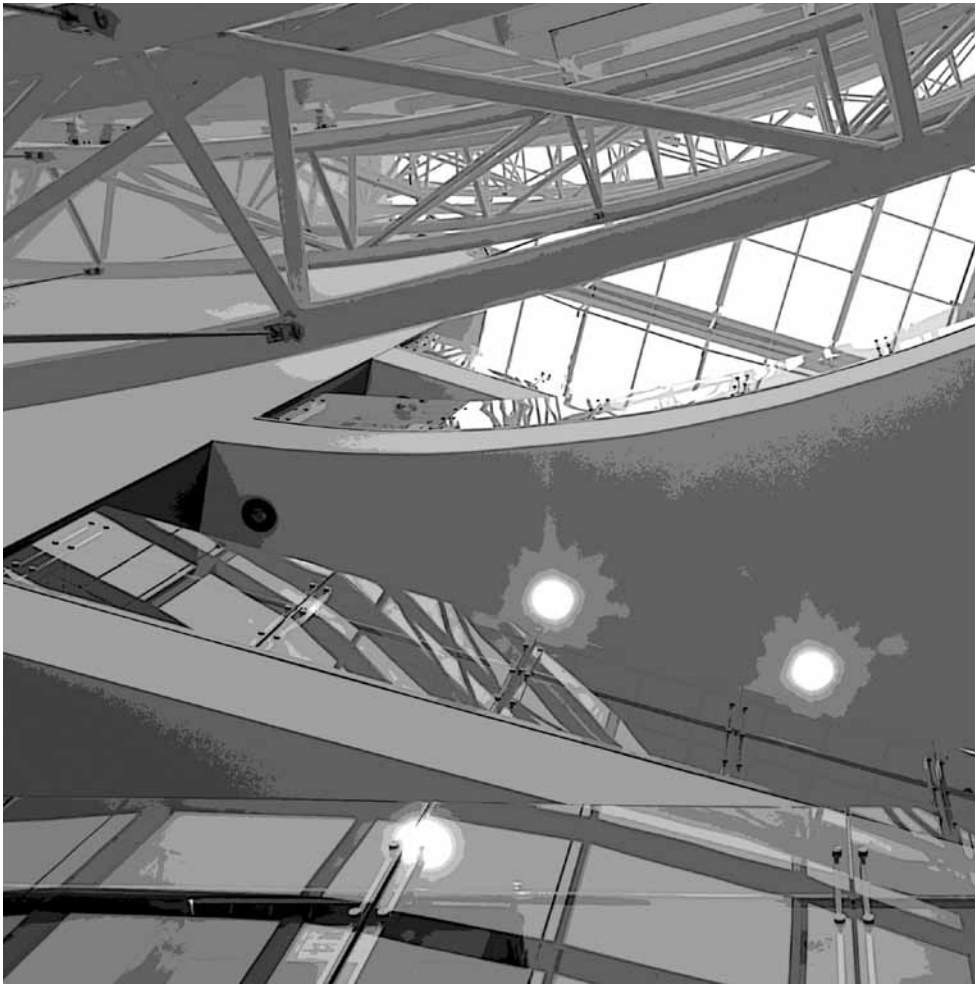


Melatonin sedative for a sleep EEG

Information for parents



Melatonin

Melatonin is a naturally occurring substance produced by the brain in the evenings, as it gets dark, to prepare the brain for night sleep. In clinical practice it is prescribed for patients with certain sleep disorders, including jet lag. Melatonin is also widely used in the UK to induce sleep in children during an EEG. For the sleep EEG recording we use melatonin in the form of a synthetic liquid or capsule.

Melatonin is regarded as a dietary supplement in the USA and is readily available in health food stores and pharmacies. Melatonin does not have a product license in the UK but can be prescribed by a doctor. (See attached sheet from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health explaining why some unlicensed drugs may be prescribed to children.)

Are there any risks or side-effects?

Children usually wake quite quickly from melatonin induced sleep, with less lasting sleepiness than other sleep inducing drugs. The medicine is generally well tolerated with no serious side effects.

What will happen?

We will write to your consultant who requested the EEG, asking that he/she considers prescribing Melatonin to help your child sleep during the EEG. Your consultant should either:

- contact you to arrange collection of the prescription to take to your pharmacy to be dispensed. Some pharmacies may need to order the melatonin so please try to take your prescription to be dispensed at least 2 weeks before your appointment. Please bring the medicine with you when you come to the EEG department.

or

- send a prescription to the EEG department for the John Radcliffe Hospital pharmacy to dispense. In this case the Melatonin should be in the EEG department for your appointment.

Please see your appointment letter to confirm what has been arranged for your child.

Please arrive at the Paediatric EEG reception at the specified appointment time. Even if your child has been prescribed melatonin, it is **essential that you also follow the sleep deprivation instructions**, as melatonin may not be effective in inducing sleep without sleep deprivation.

How is melatonin given?

Melatonin liquid is measured using a syringe, but can be transferred to a cup. Your child can have a small drink at the same time. If you are given capsules, these can be opened and the contents mixed with a drink (water, milk or fruit juice) or yoghurt if necessary. Melatonin tablets may not act fast enough, so we do not recommend tablets. If only tablets are available it will have to be crushed and mixed with a drink.

Please be aware that the clinical physiologist doing the EEG is not qualified to administer medication, but will meet you when you arrive and advise you when to give your child the melatonin. You are responsible for giving the medicine in the EEG department.

What happens after the test?

We will wake your child up at the end of the test, remove the electrodes and clean their hair as much as possible. You can then take your child home.

How to contact us

If you have any questions, please contact:

Department of Clinical Neurophysiology
Level 3, West Wing
John Radcliffe Hospital
Headley Way
Oxford OX3 9DU

Tel: **01865 231828**

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473** or email **PALSJR@orh.nhs.uk**

Deborah Cox
Clinical Physiologist
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Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust
Oxford OX3 9DU
www.oxfordradcliffe.nhs.uk/patientinformation