

Vanderbilt Behavioral Health brings the highest quality services to patients in a supportive, compassionate environment.

We work with patients and their families to help them gain the tools to get back their life. If you or a family member is suffering from major depression, bipolar disorder or catatonia, an effective treatment option might be electroconvulsive therapy (ECT).

Vanderbilt Behavioral Health

VanderbiltBehavioralHealth.com

(615) 875-1890

1601 23rd Avenue S.
Nashville, TN 37212

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER



**Vanderbilt
Electroconvulsive
Therapy Program**

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

VANDERBILT ECT PROGRAM

As a part of Vanderbilt's advanced neuromodulation program, our specialized team is dedicated to working with patients who might benefit from ECT. Patients who are hospitalized or who are receiving outpatient services can be treated in our state-of-the-art ECT suite.

WHAT IS ECT?

ECT is a highly effective, low-risk procedure that uses brief, controlled electrical stimulus to produce a seizure in the brain. The seizure is thought to bring about changes in brain chemistry that may quickly relieve symptoms in patients.

WHO SHOULD CONSIDER ECT?

ECT is most commonly recommended for people with:

- Severe depression, especially if there are life-threatening conditions such as suicidal thoughts and intent, refusal to eat, or catatonia
- Bipolar disorder, either in the manic or depressed phase, whose medications have only partially relieved their symptoms
- Schizophrenia with mood disturbance or catatonia, particularly with younger people and a shorter overall course of illness

A series of treatments (typically six to 12), given two or three times per week, will usually help, although fewer or more treatments may be

required. After the first series, your doctor may recommend, or you may choose, less frequent treatments (about once a week or once a month) in order to maintain this improvement.

VANDERBILT MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Before ECT begins, a patient has a complete physical examination in addition to a psychiatric evaluation to make sure the treatment will be safe. The medical evaluation is guided by the patient's medical history, and may include bloods tests, an electrocardiogram (ECG), a chest X-ray and a consultation with an anesthesiologist. This team works together to make sure care fits the patient's needs.



HOW ECT WORKS

Patients are given a muscle relaxer and then given general anesthesia. They are constantly monitored during the procedure. Once they are asleep, a controlled electrical stimulus will be applied to cause a brief seizure. The patient will be unaware of the seizure, but brain activity increases significantly. This activity changes some of the brain's chemistry and can reduce symptoms of depression and other mental illnesses. Recovery takes anywhere from 15 to 45 minutes.

WHAT ARE SOME RISKS OF ECT?

ECT is generally safe but, like any medical treatment, there are known risks and side effects. These might include memory loss, cognitive impairment, medical complications and other physical problems.

Most people worry about memory loss associated with ECT. Many patients report that their memory actually improves with ECT, because ECT treats some conditions that can contribute to poor short-term memory and concentration, such as depression.

To find out more
about ECT, call
(615) 875-1890

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU HAVE ECT?

It usually takes a series of ECT treatments before the treatment is fully effective. Although it is not fully understood why ECT works in patients with major depression, it is helpful for 70 to 90 percent of these patients. Although there is no guarantee that ECT will work for any individual patient, it remains among the most effective and fastest treatments for some individuals.