

The
**Electroconvulsive
Therapy Service**



Providence

Alaska Medical Center



Safe treatment, fast recovery.

A safe and effective medical treatment for certain psychiatric disorders, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is an FDA approved treatment that utilizes a small amount of electricity applied to the scalp to produce a brief seizure in the brain.

The procedure is painless and performed under general anesthesia. Patients receive treatment in the caring and compassionate environment of the ambulatory surgical center and go home the same day.

ECT has been safely used for patients experiencing a number of psychiatric disorders, from adolescents to the elderly, including those with medical illness and women who are pregnant. Approximately 100,000 individuals receive this treatment each year in the United States.

To learn if Electroconvulsive Therapy is right for you, please call us. We'd be happy to discuss your situation and how this treatment may help.

907-212-4578

Pre-Treatment Consultation

All patients must be referred for consultation by their psychiatric provider (e.g. a physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant).

At your consultation, the psychiatrist will review your current symptoms, psychiatric and medical histories, and medications to determine if ECT is a good option for you.

If ECT is recommended, the psychiatrist will order any necessary labs or medical tests that may be necessary to insure you're healthy enough to receive treatment. They may also make recommendations about your medications, to make sure they do not make ECT less safe or less effective. Before you undergo your first treatment, you will also have a physical exam performed.

During your consultation, you will receive additional information about the risks and benefits of treatment, so you can make an informed decision about your care.

We provide treatment for:

- Severe or treatment resistant depression
- Severe or treatment-resistant suicidal ideation
- Bipolar Disorder
- Schizoaffective Disorder
- Catatonia
- Mood symptoms associated with Parkinson's Disease

Our Expert Team

Electroconvulsive therapy requires the skills of an experienced team.

Our team includes psychiatrists, anesthesiologists, and psychiatric registered nurses.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where is ECT performed?

At PAMC, ECT is performed in an operating room in the Ambulatory Surgical Unit (ASU). The treatment itself takes less than 10 minutes, with about one hour of recovery after treatment.

How does ECT work?

The exact mechanism is not known. Electrical stimulation and seizure promotes changes in the brain that reduce symptoms associated with certain psychiatric disorders and restores health. ECT produces substantial improvement in about 80% of people with severe depression. In comparison, about 50% of patients respond to antidepressant medication.

How often is ECT performed?

At the start of treatment, patients receive treatment twice weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays. An average course of ECT is 12 - 16 treatments over 6 - 8 weeks. Some patients continue to receive intermittent treatments once stabilized, to prevent symptom recurrence.

What are the common side effects?

Many patients experience very limited side effects. The most common side effects are headaches, nausea, muscle aches, and jaw pain.

Does ECT cause memory impairment?

During the course of treatment, many patients experience short term memory impairment, such as forgetting details of recent conversations or things they just read. This resolves completely within a few weeks after treatment is over. Many patients feel their memory is improved after receiving ECT.

Does ECT cause brain damage?

There is no evidence that ECT causes structural brain damage. The amount of electricity that reaches the brain is too small to cause electrical injury.



Electroconvulsive therapy is the most effective treatment for severe mental health conditions, like treatment resistant depression and catatonia. For many patients, this non-invasive, interventional treatment can be life saving.

Electroconvulsive Therapy Service

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[providence.org/locations/ak/alaska-
medical-center/electroconvulsive-therapy](https://providence.org/locations/ak/alaska-medical-center/electroconvulsive-therapy)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ECT

Visit www.isen-ect.org and click Resources for Patients



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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 888-311-9127 (TTY: 711).

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