
What is an ictal exam?

An ictal exam is an assessment during a seizure. You or your child's care team will ask your child questions while they are having a seizure. The goal is to understand your child's level of consciousness.

The exam checks your child's:

- Orientation or knowing where they are and who is around them.
- Ability to move their body or do things they are asked to do.
- Ability to remember or know words or things.

It is important to know:

- What your child can feel or hear.
- If and how they can communicate.

An ictal exam helps your child's care team know which areas of the brain the seizure is affecting. This can help find the area of the brain that the seizure may be coming from.

Where do you do the exam?

An ictal exam takes place while your child stays in the hospital for their video EEG (VEEG).

VEEG is a way to video-record your child's behavior and their brain activity at the same time.

- A video camera records what your child's seizures look like. It also records the voice of the person doing the ictal exam and your child's responses.
- An EEG machine records the electrical activity in your child's brain.

When do you do the exam?

The word "ictal" means during a seizure. Ictal exams start as soon as a seizure begins. They continue until the exam is complete, even if it seems the seizure stopped.

Who can do the exam?

Any parent, caregiver or staff member can do an ictal exam as soon as a seizure starts.

What happens during the exam?

The instructions hang on the wall above your child's hospital bed. Ask and say these things out loud while your child is having a seizure:

- What are you feeling?
- Remember the code word "purple elephant."

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Ictal exam, continued

- Show your child an object. Then ask: What is this?
 - Objects include pens, phones, glasses or other simple things.
- Where are you? Who is this?
- Lift your arms.
 - Tell your child to do it first. Then, show them if they do not respond. See if they can copy you.
- Do you remember the code word?

How can I help?

1. Hit the red seizure button.
2. Practice seizure safety:
 - Keep calm. Stay with your child.
 - Turn them on their side, so they do not choke on their saliva or vomit.
 - Do not put anything in their mouth. They will not choke on their tongue.
 - Do not try to restrain or hold them still.
3. Turn on the lights. Take off any blankets.
4. Try not to stand in the way of the camera in the room. The video will help your child's care team see the seizure symptoms and activity.
5. Start the ictal exam by reading the questions and statements on the wall.

Please ask your child's nurse or doctor if you have any questions about the ictal exam.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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