Depression is the third largest individual health problem in Australia after heart disease and stroke. Mental illness is common in Australia with one in five Australians experiencing a mental illness at some stage in their lives, and many experiencing more than one mental illness at one time. About 6% of Australian people will experience a major depressive illness in their lifetime. 1 in 4 women and 1 in 8 men will experience some form of depression during their lifetime.

ECT is the most effective and rapidly acting treatment for severe depression available today. Scientific evidence and peer-review medical literature supports the safety and efficacy of ECT. There are consistent findings in medical literature that ECT is effective in the treatment of a range of serious conditions including major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, catatonia, psychotic depression, medication resistant schizophrenia and other severely disabling conditions, many of which are unresponsive to all other treatments.

We still use ECT today because no other approved treatment has yet been able to replace it. When depression goes untreated or when it is ineffectively treated, it can cause enormous suffering and even death by suicide. ECT saves lives. ECT works even when psychotherapy or medications fail.

ECT is an essential part of the treatment options offered by Perth Clinic. ECT is offered to inpatients and may also be offered on a day patient basis. The decision to give day patient ECT will be made between the treating psychiatrist and the patient.

Patients who undertake day patient ECT are required to have a responsible escort to accompany them home in a suitable vehicle. A train, bus or motorbike is usually not suitable. Perth Clinic adheres to the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetist (2010) and your safety post anaesthetic is vital to our staff.

How do I prepare for Day Patient ECT?

- Please do not smoke for at least 12hrs before your ECT procedure
- ECT is a morning procedure so do not eat or drink for 6 hours before your scheduled arrival at Perth Clinic. You may have a sip of water with your morning tablets if required e.g. blood pressure medication, cardiac medication and or analgesia.
- If you are diabetic your medication will be given to you after your treatment.

What do I need to bring to hospital?

- Medicare Card
- Health Insurance details
- Full/part pension number if applicable
- Current morning medications
- Telephone number of your supporter who will be picking you up.

What should I wear?

- Loose fitting top that opens down the centre.
- Please leave all valuables and jewellery at home.
When should I arrive?

A member of the administration staff will ring you the night prior to your procedure and inform you of the time to arrive at Perth Clinic in the morning.

Where do I go when I arrive?

Please present yourself to the main nursing station at River 1. From there nursing staff will escort you to Park 1 where a nurse will prepare you for your ECT.

What kind of anaesthetic will be given?

A general short acting anaesthetic will be administered by one of our anaesthetists.

A muscle relaxant will also be given as part of the anaesthetic. One of the side effects of this medication is that some people may experience muscle soreness like they have been exercising. Not all people experience this side effect and generally it lasts for only a short period. An anti-inflammatory medication can be administered during anaesthesia if this muscle soreness is problematic.

Post ECT

After your procedure you will be taken to the recovery area. During this time our nursing staff will continually monitor your progress and comfort. Once you are awake and your observations are stable you will be transferred by wheelchair to the day patient area, where the day patient nurse will care for you.

What happens after the procedure?

You may still feel slightly drowsy after the procedure and for at least 2 hours depending on your recovery. You are required to remain at Perth Clinic until nursing staff are satisfied you are able to go home.

For the first 24 hours you are asked not to

- Work
- Drive a vehicle
- Operate machinery
- Drink alcohol
- Exercise
- Take sedatives unless prescribed
- Sign any important legal documents.

What happens when I leave hospital?

When you leave hospital you will receive instructions with advice on the activities you can undertake as well as who to contact if problems arise.

If you have any difficulties after leaving hospital, please call Perth Clinic on 9481 4888 (24hr service).