

# Electroconvulsive Therapy

## CONTACT US

For further information, please call our confidential voicemail at **860-679-3396** or visit our website at [psychiatry.uchc.edu](http://psychiatry.uchc.edu). ECT is available Monday through Friday from **6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

## OUR LOCATION AND DIRECTIONS

The Electroconvulsive Therapy Department is located on the 5th floor of the John Dempsey Hospital on the UConn Health Farmington campus.

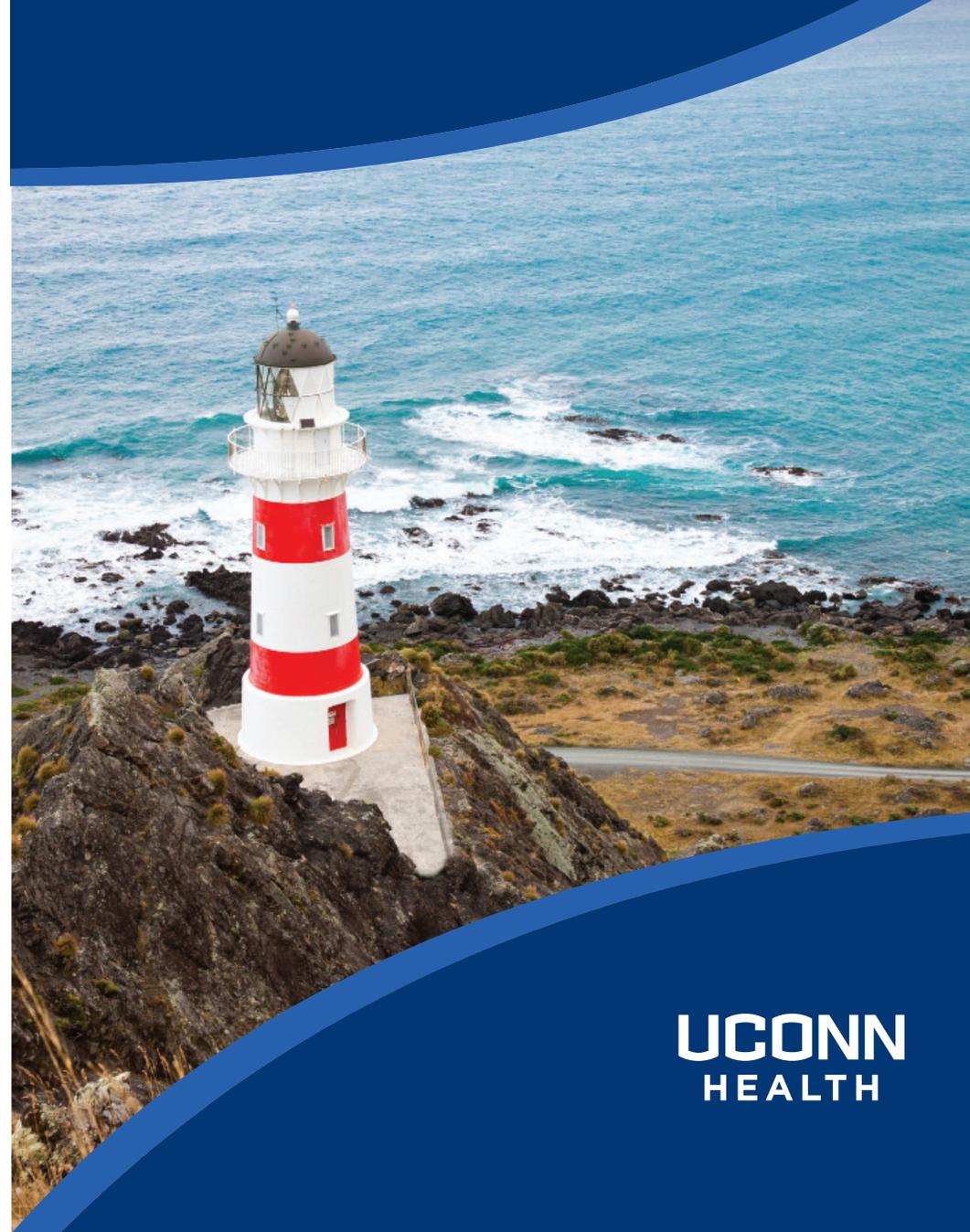
To reach the Farmington campus, access I-84 East or West, take Exit 39 and turn right at the first light (end of ramp) onto Farmington Avenue (Route 4) East. Continue three more lights (one mile) and turn right into the UConn Health entrance.

Free valet parking is available for patients and visitors. Please follow the valet parking signs and drive to the main hospital entrance.

Directions are also available on our website at [uchc.edu](http://uchc.edu) or by calling **800-535-6232** or **860-679-7692**.

UConn Health  
263 Farmington Avenue  
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# COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## WHAT IS ELECTROCONVULSIVE THERAPY?

Electroconvulsive therapy is a form of treatment in which an electrical current is sent to the brain using electrodes placed on the scalp or temple. This triggers a very brief seizure usually lasting less than 30 seconds. During ECT, an individual will have received general anesthesia and a muscle relaxant. Therefore, only minimal movement is observed and the person is completely unaware of the procedure.

## WHAT IS THE GOAL OF TREATMENT?

To restore individuals enjoyment and involvement in everyday life activities.

## HOW DOES ECT WORK?

No one knows for sure, but ECT is the most effective treatment we have for depression and catatonia. Although the changes in the brain that are caused by the electrical stimulation are not fully understood, it is believed that the treatment promotes changes in brain biology which restore health.

## WHO IS A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR ECT?

Candidates include individuals that have failed to respond to medication trials. The severity of the illness may indicate starting with ECT rather than waiting for a response to medications, e.g., severe depression accompanied by starvation or catatonia and suicidality. Some individuals may have medical issues that prevent them from taking psychotropic medications. Individuals that have had a good response to ECT in the past are good candidates. There are very few medical issues that would prevent someone from having ECT. All candidates must have a complete preoperative exam prior to starting ECT treatments.

## HOW OFTEN ARE PATIENTS TREATED?

Initially, ECT is given two to three times a week for two to four weeks. Some individuals may need more treatments and some may need less. An acute course of treatment is about eight to 12 treatments, but there is no set number of treatments. Some individuals may benefit from continued treatments called maintenance ECT.

## WHAT ARE THE COMMON SIDE EFFECTS OF ECT?

While there are few or no reported side effects, some people experience headaches, nausea, muscle aches, jaw pain, and memory difficulties around the time of treatment.