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By Chris Tighe at 1:14 pm, Feb 22, 2017

Definition

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Definition

[By Mayo Clinic Staff](#)

Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is a procedure, done under general anesthesia, in which small electric currents are passed through the brain, intentionally triggering a brief seizure. ECT seems to cause changes in brain chemistry that can quickly reverse symptoms of certain mental illnesses. It often works when other treatments are unsuccessful.

Much of the stigma attached to ECT is based on early treatments in which high doses of electricity were administered without anesthesia, leading to memory loss, fractured bones and other serious side effects.

ECT is much safer today. Although ECT still causes some side effects, it now uses electric currents given in a controlled setting to achieve the most benefit with the fewest possible risks.

Mayo Clinic in Minnesota has been recognized as the best Neurology & Neurosurgery hospital in the nation for 2016-2017 by U.S. News & World Report.

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