

## Autonomic Testing

### *How to prepare and what to expect*

*This handout explains what autonomic testing is. It includes instructions on how to prepare for the test, how the test works, and how to get your results.*

### What is autonomic testing?

The *autonomic nervous system* controls your heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, sweating, digestive system, some sensations, and other body functions. *Autonomic testing* shows how your autonomic nervous system is working.

Follow these instructions to prepare for your test:

### 2 Days Before

Stop taking antihistamines such as Zyrtec, Allegra, or others. These drugs will affect your test results.

### 1 Day Before

Drink plenty of fluids – at least 8 glasses (8 ounces each) of water, milk, or juice.

### Test Day

- Do **not** eat or drink anything that contains **caffeine** (including coffee, tea, chocolate, most soft drinks, and some medicines), **nicotine**, or **alcohol**. These substances will affect your test results.
- Take your prescription medicines as usual, unless your doctor tells you not to.
- Eat normally and drink water, milk, or juice up to 2 hours before the time of the test.
- Starting 2 hours before your test, do **not** eat or drink anything.



*The day before your test, drink at least 8 glasses of water, milk, or juice.*

- **If you are ill on the day of your test:** Call to reschedule your appointment. Illness will affect your test results.
- Bring a list of all the medicines you take and when you last took them. Include both prescription medicines and medicines you bought without a prescription (over-the-counter).
- If you have a pacemaker, please bring the information you have about it.
- Wear comfortable, loose clothing.

### **How does the test work?**

- Before the test, you will be asked to remove any tight clothing, such as compression stockings, girdles, or corsets.
- A technologist will monitor how certain activities and procedures affect your heart rate and blood pressure. Some of these activities are breathing deeply, blowing into a tube, and the “tilt table” test.

The tilt table test uses a table that moves. It shows your heart rate and blood pressure while you are in different positions, such as lying and standing.

- We will also stimulate patches of your skin and monitor how you sweat.
- No medicines are injected during the testing.
- The test usually takes 2 to 3 hours.

### **Who interprets the results and how do I get them?**

A *neurophysiologist* (a doctor who specializes in conditions of the nervous system) will interpret your test results and send them to your doctor who referred you to us. Your own doctor will talk with you about your results.

### **Where will the test be done?**

Your test will be done in **Neurodiagnostics**, on the 7th floor of the medical center. Take the Pacific elevator to the 7th floor.

Please arrive 5 to 10 minutes before your appointment time and check in at our reception desk in 7-East.

If you need to reschedule your test, please call 206.598.4211.

## How to Find UWMC

UWMC is at 1959 N.E. Pacific St., Seattle, WA 98195. See the map below.

For driving directions, please ask for our handout “Driving Directions and Parking.” You can also find this handout online at:

[https://healthonline.washington.edu/document/health\\_online/pdf/Driving-Directions-Parking.pdf](https://healthonline.washington.edu/document/health_online/pdf/Driving-Directions-Parking.pdf)



### Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Neurodiagnostics, 7-East:  
206.598.4211, weekdays  
from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.