

# Autonomic Testing

## *How to prepare and what to expect*

*This handout explains autonomic testing. It includes 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.

### How do I prepare for my test?

**Certain substances will affect your test results.** You **must** follow these instructions before your test:

#### 2 Days Before

- **Stop** taking antihistamines such as Zyrtec, Allegra, and others.
- If you need to reschedule your test, call 206.598.4211.

#### 1 Day Before

- Do **not** eat, drink, or smoke anything that contains alcohol or cannabis starting **at least 24 hours before** your test.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Try to drink at least 8 full glasses (8 ounces each) of water, juice, or milk.



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

#### On Test Day

- **Starting at midnight on test day:** Do **not** eat, drink, or smoke anything that contains caffeine or nicotine. Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, chocolate, most soft drinks, and some medicines.
- **Starting 2 hours before your test:** Do **not** eat or drink anything. This includes **NO** water. You **must** fast starting 2 hours before your test, or we will have to reschedule.

## Medicines

Take your usual medicines with a small sip of water, unless your doctor tells you not to.

## Before You Leave Home

- **If you do not feel well:** Call 206.598.4211 to reschedule your test. Illness will affect your test results.
- Put on comfortable, loose clothing.
- Plan to check in **5 to 10 minutes before** your appointment time.

## What to Bring

- 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.

## At the Hospital

- Your test will be done in **Neurodiagnostics**, on the 7th floor of UWMC - Montlake. Take the Pacific elevator to the 7th floor.
- Check in at our reception desk in 7-East.

## How does the test work?

- Before the test, we will ask you 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 areas of your skin and monitor how you sweat.
- We do not inject any medicines 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 the nervous system) will interpret your test results and send them to the provider who referred you to us. Your own provider will talk with you about your results.

## How to Find UWMC

UWMC - Montlake 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/sites/default/files/record\\_pdfs/Driving-Directions-Parking.pdf](https://healthonline.washington.edu/sites/default/files/record_pdfs/Driving-Directions-Parking.pdf)



### Questions?

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

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