

## Autonomic testing



**Your child has been scheduled for an Autonomic test in the GI Autonomic and Motility Suite at Children's Wisconsin Hospital on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ am / pm.**

It is important that you **stop at a Welcome desk for a badge and directions to Day surgery on 4 East** of the hospital. Please check in at pre-op 15 minutes before your scheduled test time.

- If you are late, we may have to reschedule the visit to get all of the testing done. Please consider using the valet parking in front of the hospital building. There is also a parking structure where you can either walk on the surface lot or use the skywalk to get into the hospital building.
- The autonomic test requires a lot of preparation. **Please give us at least a 48 hour notice if you cannot keep your appointment.** Call 414-266-3825 to reschedule.

### What is autonomic testing?

The autonomic nervous system (ANS) is the part of the brain, spinal cord and nerves that regulate most of the body's automatic functions. Some examples are heart rate and blood pressure, sweating and digestion. Autonomic testing looks at the ANS. It can tell us if the ANS is working as it should. There are many diseases like diabetes, amyloidosis, and Guillain-Barré syndrome that can injure nerves. ANS testing can help decide how to treat and manage these illnesses. It can also help us to decide how to treat problems like migraines, fainting, chronic abdominal pain, severe fatigue and chronic pain syndrome.

### What tests will be done?

At Children's four tests will be done. They are not always done in the same order. One test will measure your child's sweat. For the other 3 tests, your child's blood pressure and heart rate are watched. The tests are:

1. QSART, or sweat test. It checks the body's sweating response. The sweat glands are activated on the inner arm, an area just below the knee, the inner ankle and the outer top of the foot. A sensor is put on each of these four areas. A natural chemical activates the sweat nerves. The amount of sweat is then measured.
2. Valsalva maneuver test. The patient lays flat on a table that is tilted to a 30 degree angle. The patient will blow into a device that has resistance. It is like blowing up a balloon.
3. Heart rate deep breathing variability test. The patient lays flat on a table and is guided through a deep breathing exercise.
4. Tilt table test. The patient is tilted to an almost standing position (70 degree angle) for 30 to 40 minutes. The patient is never tilted upside-down.

The series of tests may take up to 2½ hours. No medicines or needles are used for these tests. During this time the patient needs to stay quiet and still to get the best recording.

Parents and family members will not be in the room with the patient. They will be asked to stay in the waiting room inside the motility suite. When all the results are reviewed together, it tells us how the ANS is working.

## When to stop medicines

When the tests are scheduled, you will get a list of medicines that affect the ANS. If your child is taking any medicines on this list it **is important to go over the list with the doctor who prescribed the medicines before stopping them. If it is okay to stop a medicine before the test, your doctor will tell you how to stop them safely. If it is not safe to stop a medicine, the tests can still be done.** The results will be interpreted taking this into account. Please bring a complete list of all medicines, herbs and supplements with doses that your child takes to the test appointment. Read the labels on any over the counter medicines your child may be taking. Many include medicines that may affect the testing. Read labels and check the medicine list.

## How should I prepare my child?

- Review the “when to stop medicines” information **at least 2 weeks before** the test date.

### The day before the tests:

- **No alcoholic drinks** 14 hours before the tests.

### The day of the tests:

- Skin should be clean. Do not use **lotions, oil, or perfume** on your arms, chest or legs. **Deodorant and** face makeup is fine.
- **No caffeine** 4 hours before the tests. This includes tea and coffee, and caffeinated soft drinks and chocolate.
- **No nicotine** 3 hours before the tests. Do not smoke.
- Have a light meal and drink fluid 1 hour before the tests.

### What to wear for the tests:

- No **tight clothing** such as Jobst stockings, corsets or abdominal binders.
- Wear loose fitting pants or shorts. We will need to roll them up above the knee to place sensors. Do not wear skinny jeans.
- Bring a pair of “flip flops” or slip-on sandals to wear during the tests. We need to be able to see your feet and toes.
- Do not wear black or dark colored nail polish. It may interfere with some of our equipment.

### Results:

All the data from the tests is reviewed by a doctor specially trained in reading test results. A summary report of the test results will be sent to your provider. This may take up to 10 days. Your provider will let you know about the results and if any treatment is needed. If needed, your provider may recommend that you see an autonomic specialist.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.**