

## **Autonomic Nervous System Testing**

The autonomic nervous system controls your blood pressure, heart rate, sweating, and body temperature. You may have been scheduled for some tests of your autonomic nervous system. These tests include sweat testing and testing how your heart rate and blood pressure vary.

### **The Tests**

1. Your heart rate and blood pressure are recorded using a miniature blood pressure cuff placed on one of your fingers.
2. After you rest for at least five minutes, your heart rate will be measured while you breathe deeply for 90 seconds. This test takes 10 to 20 minutes.
3. Heart rate and blood pressure will be recorded while you blow into a tube, against pressure, for 15 seconds. This test will be repeated two to four times. This test takes about 15 to 30 minutes.
4. After lying down for at least ten minutes, your heart rate and blood pressure will be measured after you stand up. You will remain standing for 5 to 15 minutes. This test lasts 15 to 30 minutes.
5. Sweat function is tested at the hand and the foot. Your hand and foot will receive a weak electrical current for five minutes. This will make your skin sweat. Then a soft paste is applied to the skin. The paste hardens within five minutes and forms a mold of sweat droplets. The test is not painful. It takes about one hour.

### **Getting Ready for Your Autonomic Testing**

Eat a light breakfast before coming for your test. Avoid a heavy meal.

Do not drink any alcohol for 24 hours before the tests.

Take your medications as prescribed unless your doctor tells you otherwise. If you have been told not to take a medication until after the test, bring it with you.

If you have any questions about these tests, please call the Neurophysiology Laboratory at (612) 725-2000, extension 4265, Monday through Friday, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. If you call after hours, please leave a message.

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