

## **WHAT IS NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING**

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Neuropsychological testing is a series of standardized tests that provide information about brain functioning. Just as an MRI gives a picture of your brain structures and an EEG gives a picture of electrical brain activity, neuropsychological testing evaluates how your brain is functioning.

### **What kind of brain functioning is measured?**

Neuropsychological testing conducted as part of a Phase I epilepsy evaluation typically measures general intellect, reasoning and/or problem solving skills, multi-tasking, attention and concentration, learning and memory, language skills, and sensory and motor skills.

### **What can I expect to happen during my appointment?**

You will meet with a neuropsychologist who is a clinical psychologist with special experience and training in measuring thinking abilities in patients with neurological disorder. You will be interviewed about your epilepsy, your medical history, and whether or not you have noticed any changes in your thinking ability. You will be asked about your mood because many patients with epilepsy experience depression, anxiety or other emotional issues that affect their quality of life. You will be asked other background information that helps us interpret your test results, such as how far you went in school and your occupation. You will work with a psychometrist who will administer the tests one-on-one. You will also be asked to complete a paper and pencil test that will tell us more about your thoughts and feelings so that we can let your epilepsy doctor know if you are having emotional difficulties that might require medication or other kinds of treatment.

### **How long will the appointment take?**

The evaluation usually takes about four hours, although sometimes it is longer or shorter.

### **Do I need to do anything special to prepare?**

It is important to get a good night's sleep and be well rested for your evaluation. It can be hard to concentrate when you are very tired and that might not give us the best picture of your brain functioning. We also recommend that you eat a good breakfast or lunch before your appointment so that your hunger does not distract you or make it hard for you to focus. If you wear glasses or need to take medication, please bring them with you.

### **How do you use the test results?**

We will look at your pattern of performance, including your strengths and weaknesses. These tests can help locate your seizure focus because sometimes the area where the seizure starts does not work as well as the rest of the brain. This is not always true and sometimes there can be just a slight difference. Everyone has areas of the brain that are stronger or weaker than others, but in people with seizures the weaker area often corresponds with the seizure focus. This information is given to your epilepsy doctor to provide additional information in making decisions about treatment for your epilepsy.