



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

Autonomic function test

Cardiology

Patient information

What is this information about?

This information is about a test called an Autonomic Function Test. This test looks at how well your autonomic system works. This information tells you what happens during the test, how you should prepare for the test, and how you will get the results.

Why have I been given this information?

You have been referred for this test by your doctor, and there are some things that you need to do to prepare. This information will help you to understand what to expect, and how to get ready for the test.

What is the autonomic system?

The autonomic nervous system is an important mechanism that controls all the bodily functions that are under unconscious control (things that happen automatically, without you thinking about them). This includes things like heart rate, blood pressure, temperature and digestion.

What is an autonomic function test?

An autonomic function test measures how well your body can alter your blood pressure and heart rate in response to certain challenges. It is useful in diagnosing conditions that affect autonomic function which may cause symptoms such as unexplained fainting, weakness or dizziness.

What does the test involve?

Preparation:

- The test takes about 30 minutes, including setup, although you could be in the department for longer.
- Wear comfortable clothing, which will allow access to attach electrodes (stickers) to your chest to record your ECG (heart rate and rhythm).
- Please bring a list of your current medications with you.

During the test:

- Electrodes will be attached to your chest.
- A small finger cuff will be attached to your finger to monitor your blood pressure on every heartbeat. This will feel like a constant squeezing of your finger but is not painful.
- You will also have a standard blood pressure cuff attached around your arm.
- Once everything is attached, you will be monitored while you are not moving (at rest) for several minutes.
- You will then be asked to do certain things, such as deep breathing, blowing hard, squeezing an object with your hand, and standing up.
- Between each movement, there are a few minutes of resting measurement.

What happens after the test?

A detailed report will be made about the results of the test, and the final results will be shared with the doctor who referred you for the test.

When will I receive the results?

The report will be sent to the doctor who referred you for the test. They will contact you to discuss the results.

If you have any enquiries about your results, please contact the department where the referral was originally made.

Who can I contact for further information and advice about your appointment?

Please contact the booking team on:

01273 696955, Ext: 63619.

This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton & Hove or Haywards Heath

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