Wada Testing

What this test is
The Wada test is an exam done before surgery for epilepsy. During the test, each half of the brain is put to sleep, one at a time, while the other half is tested.

This test can tell which part of the brain is used most of the time for language skills. It can also tell if a single side of the brain can support a person’s memory skills.

With the results of this and other tests you will have, your doctor will be able to tell you what you can expect after surgery.

How we will prepare you for your test
You will check in at the front desk. You will then go to the Radiology area.

To prepare you for your test, we will:
• Place sticky patches on your scalp to record your brain activity during the test. This recording is called an EEG.
• Start an IV (intravenous) line in one of your veins to give you medication during the test.
• Take some blood for testing.
• Give you a language and memory test. We will show you 8 objects and ask you to remember them. Then we will test your basic language skills such as understanding, naming, repetition and reading. When this is done you will be shown 16 objects, which will include the 8 objects you saw earlier. You will be asked to point out the 8 items you saw earlier. This brief language and memory test is done two more times during the Wada test.

Next step – the angiogram (x-ray with dye)
We will then take a special x-ray of your brain arteries. This is called an angiogram. A thin tube (catheter) will be placed in an artery in your groin. A dye will be injected through this tube so the arteries in your brain can be seen on x-rays.

How the Wada test is done
The Wada test begins after the x-ray is done. We will give you medication through your IV line to put half of your brain to sleep for about 10 minutes. During that brief time, we will show you 8 new objects and then test your language skills again. Once the medications have worn off, we will test your recall of the 8 objects.

The other half of your brain will then be put to sleep and the whole memory and language test is done again. We’ll use 8 new objects for the memory test.

Doctors and several other health care members will be with you during your test. The angiogram and Wada testing take about two hours.

After your test
• We will watch you closely for 4 to 6 hours and check your blood pressure and pulse often.
• The leg used for the angiogram must remain straight for a few hours. This is to prevent bleeding at the catheter site.
• The doctor will review the results of the Wada test with you and your family.
• You must have someone to drive you home. If you live alone, it is a good idea to have someone stay with you that evening. Limit your activities and avoid any strenuous activity until the next day. Do not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds for the next 3 days.
Instructions to follow before your Wada test

• Do not eat or drink for 6 hours before the start of the test. You may take sips of water to take your morning medications.

• Take all of your medications, including seizure medication, the morning of the test.

• Please let us know as soon as possible if you are taking any blood thinners. These include Coumadin and aspirin.

• Please make sure that your hair is clean. Do not apply hairspray, grease, styling gel, or mousse to your hair on the day of your test.

• Please arrive at ___________ on the day of your Wada test.

• Come to the main lobby to check in.

• The angiogram and Wada test are outpatient procedures. You must call your insurance company to see if these procedures must be “pre-certified.”

• If you have any questions about the Wada test or angiogram, please call your doctor or __________________________.

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem.