A Sodium Amytal or Wada test is needed as part of your work-up for epilepsy surgery. This test helps us locate which side of your brain supports language and looks at the blood vessels. It tries to predict if the side of the brain that doesn't have surgery can support memory and language functions. This handout will help explain what will happen before, during, and after the test. Bring this handout with you for the test.

If you are allergic to shellfish (shrimp, lobster, etc.) or have had a rash from iodine on your skin or into your arteries or veins during other tests, please call our office right away: (608) 263-9578.

About the Test
This test is done as part of a special X-ray called a cerebral angiogram. This X-ray uses dye to show the blood vessels in the brain. Testing is done by doctors called neuroradiologists.

Before You Come to the Hospital
A physical exam will need to be done within 30 days prior to the test. This can be done by your own doctor. Some blood work will need to be done. We need the lab results no later than 1 week before the Wada.

Certain medicines can affect your body’s ability to clot. Be sure your doctor is aware of the medicines you are taking before your test. The only medicine that affects clotting that must be stopped before is warfarin (Coumadin®). You may need to be in the hospital for a few days before the test if you are taking this. We will safely switch over to a different blood thinner. Do not stop taking any blood thinner without first talking with your doctor.

Tell us about your allergies. Let us know if you are allergic to x-ray dyes, IV contrast, iodine, antibiotics, anesthetic agents, latex, or any other medicines that you have taken before.

Tell us if you have sleep apnea or use a CPAP machine at night. This is important to know so we can safely use medicines that make you sleepy during the procedure. Bring your CPAP machine with you.

Let us know if you have had any fever or pain in the week before your test. We also need to know if you have had any procedures or tests in the month before.

Make plans for someone to drive you home after. You cannot drive for 24 hours. Plan to have someone stay with you that night, in case you have problems.

Day of the Test
Do not eat on the morning of the test!
Take your seizure medicine with one or two glasses of water or fruit juice before 6 a.m.
Do not take any other medicine until you talk to the doctor. Bring a one-day supply of your medicines with you.

Be at the hospital by ________ a.m. Take the Atrium elevators to the 3rd floor Radiology reception desk to check in.

If under 18 years old: Go to the Pediatric Day Treatment Center at the American Family Children’s Hospital.

You will change into a hospital gown. An IV will be started in one of your arms so we
can give you extra fluids. One of the doctors will meet you and talk to you about the test itself. They will tell you about the procedure in more detail, explain risks and benefits, and obtain your consent. Be sure to ask questions and talk about your concerns.

An EEG (Electro Encephalography) technician will come and place EEG electrodes (wires) on your scalp so we can record your brainwaves during the test.

**During the Test**
Around a.m. you will be helped onto a cart. A nurse will take you to the X-ray room. Family may wait in the waiting area. You will moved onto the table where the test is done. **You must lie very still!**

The doctors will numb one side of your groin and put a small catheter (IV tube) into an artery. Only **one** needle puncture is needed to test both sides of the brain. Using an X-ray camera called a **fluoroscope**, the IV is threaded up to one of the arteries in your neck (carotid) that supplies blood to the brain. Dye is pumped into the IV, this outlines the blood vessels on that side of your brain.

If the doctor decides that the blood vessels are working well, a drug called sodium amytal is put into the IV. The drug will put one side of your brain to sleep. The other side will be awake.

The doctor will ask you questions. You may get frustrated during this part of the test. This goes away when the medicine wears off. When the test is over for that side of your brain, the doctor will move the IV to the other side. The test is repeated on the other side. The entire test lasts about 90 minutes.

**After the Test**
After the IV is taken out, we will hold pressure on your groin for at least 10 minutes to help the artery seal the puncture. You will be **lifted** onto the cart and taken back to the recovery area. There will be a bandage on your groin. You will not be allowed to move your leg on that side for 2 and 6 hours. Nurses will check your vital signs. They will check your groin for any bleeding, bruising, or swelling.

You may eat as soon as you feel like it. Drink extra fluids to help flush the dye from your body. You will have to use a bedpan or urinal for the first few hours after the test. A nurse will help you to the bathroom when you can get up. If there are no problems, you may go home the same day.

The team will review the results and decide about your need for surgery. The neurosurgeon or nurse will call you about the decision in 2 to 3 weeks. You will have a visit in the neurosurgery and/or epilepsy clinic about 4 weeks after your test.

**At Home**
Keep the band-aid over the groin site for the next day. Drink 10-20 glasses of fluid the first 24 hours. **If bleeding occurs at the site, apply direct pressure and go to the nearest emergency room.** Do not drink any alcohol during this time.

**When to Call**
- The site becomes red and/or hot.
- Any yellow or green drainage.
- Swelling occurs.
- Your temperature goes over 100° F by mouth.
- A large bruise appears under or around the site.
- Severe pain or spasm occurs in the leg.
- Numbness or tingling in the foot or leg.
- Itching, hives or rash appears.

**Who to Call**

For questions after the test, call **(608) 262-0486**. This will give you the paging operator. Ask for the neuro-vascular doctor on call. Give the operator your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

If you live out of the area, please call **1-800-323-8942**.