

Key Takeaways:

Why Was I Referred to a Neuropsychologist?

A Guide for Individuals with Epilepsy

- Neuropsychologists help patients and their treatment teams understand how an individual brain works.
- When you see a neuropsychologist, you participate in tasks that seem like you are being “tested,” and this can understandably make individuals nervous. We look at the results in comparison to each other, in order to see how your brain works, we need to observe your strengths as well as your weaknesses.
- You may be referred to a neuropsychologist for many reasons. Most commonly, a referral comes from the patient who may feel that their thinking is not working as well as it used to. Other times, it may come from your treatment providers to determine if a medicine needs to be changed, if there are external or emotional burdens that are limiting your thinking efficiency, or to determine if epilepsy surgery is a safe option for you.
- When considering epilepsy surgery, the neuropsychologist may use tools like paper and pencil tests, special MRI scans, and other ways to directly determine how parts of your brain contribute to memory, language, and other functions. This provides important information to the team regarding how much or how little different parts of your brain contribute to your day-to-day cognitive functioning.
- During an appointment with a neuropsychologist, you will participate in cognitive tasks, but the neuropsychologist will also take a history. It is often helpful to have someone with you to report this history, especially if you are not aware of or can't recall your seizures.
- Because the neuropsychological evaluation takes several hours, you will need to plan to spend most of the day there, and at the end of the day you will not receive immediate results. We need to spend several hours reviewing all of your performances. Typically, a follow up feedback session can be scheduled to review any findings, and there is always a written report that details the results.

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