

## The Digit Repetition Test

### **Instructions:**

Ask the patient to repeat a list of numbers as dictated by the examiner. Tell the patient: "I am going to say some simple numbers. Listen carefully and when I am finished, say the numbers after me."

Say the numbers in a normal tone of voice at a rate of one digit per second. Do not group digits in pairs (e.g., 2-6, 5-9) or in sequences that could serve as an aid in repetition (e.g., in telephone number form, such as 376-8439). Numbers should be presented randomly, without natural sequences (e.g., not 2-4-6-8). Begin with a two-number sequence, and continue until the patient fails to repeat all the numbers correctly.

### **Test Items**

3-7	9-2
7-4-9	1-7-4
8-5-2-7	5-2-9-7
2-9-6-8-3	6-3-8-5-1
5-7-2-9-4-6	2-9-4-7-3-8
8-1-5-9-3-6-2	4-1-9-2-7-5-1
3-9-8-2-5-1-4-7	8-5-3-9-1-6-2-7
7-2-8-5-4-6-7-3-9	2-1-9-7-3-5-8-4-6

### **Scoring:**

A normal score for a patient of average intelligence is  $7 \pm 2$  digits. A patient of average intelligence can accurately repeat five to seven numbers without any difficulty. In a person without retardation or obvious aphasia, the inability to repeat more than five numbers indicates defective attention. Having the patient repeat the numbers backwards should not be used to measure attention, as it requires a different set of cognitive processes.

### **Source:**

Strub RL, Black FW. *The Mental Status Examination in Neurology*. 4th ed. Philadelphia: FA Davis Company; 2000.