

# Standard administration of the Westmead PTA Scale

August 2026

Use these instructions to support the validated administration of the Westmead Post-Traumatic (PTA) Amnesia Scale.

## Test equipment

- The Westmead PTA Scale scoresheet
- A set of the 9 Westmead PTA Scale picture cards
- A set of black and white or colour photographs of:
  - the usual assessor; and
  - 2 other staff of similar appearance and attributes to the usual assessor
- A pen

## Standard procedure questions and instructions

### Scoring

Answers to each question are written down in the spaces provided on the scoresheet. Give a score of 1 if correct or 0 if incorrect. No half marks are given. When a patient requires a prompt as outlined in the standard procedures below, place an asterisk next to the answer box. This indicates the question was administered differently from the others. It has no bearing on how you score the question.

### First day of testing

Ask the patient the following 7 questions. Refer to the notes for each question for related prompts for clarification on their responses. Record the score out of 7 on the scoresheet.

#### Q1. How old are you?

Ask for clarification if the patient states; for example, that they will be “30 next year”. The acceptable clarifications are: “So that makes you how old at the moment?” or “How old are you now?”

#### Q2. What is your date of birth?

If the patient has difficulty with the concept of “date of birth”, ask “When is your birthday?”, then follow with “What year were you born in?”

You may need to ask a family member what the patient would have given as their date of birth before their injury and use this as the correct answer throughout testing.

#### Q3. What month are we in?

The patient must name the month or identify which numerical month we are in. For example, if it is June, they can say “we are in the sixth month”.

**Q4. What time of day is it: morning, afternoon or night?**

The patient should answer with one of the 3 choices given in the question.

**Q5. What day of the week is it?**

You may add for emphasis "What day of the week is it today?"

**Q6. What year are we in?**

Acceptable responses are "2026" or the shorter form of "26".  
An acceptable alternative prompt is, "The year is 20 what?"

**Q7. What is the name of this place?**

The patient must give the name of the hospital. For example, "Westmead Hospital".  
The patient does not score a point for just saying "hospital".  
If the patient cannot name the hospital, give them a choice of 3 options, being mindful of providing the names of 2 other hospitals of similar size and locality.  
If there is only one hospital in the locality, provide the names of hospitals in nearby towns or other health facilities (e.g. GP clinic or medical centre), or another community service. Use the same alternative choices each day to maintain consistency.

**Example of alternative script**

**Assessor:** What is the name of this place?

**Patient:** No response or "I don't know"

**Assessor:** What is the name of this place? Are you at home, in a hospital or in a hotel?

**Patient:** Hospital

**Assessor:** What is the name of this hospital?

**Patient:** No response or "I don't know"

**Assessor:** Is it Nepean Hospital, Westmead Hospital or Liverpool Hospital?

**Patient:** Westmead

Note: the patient must answer both parts of the question correctly to score the point.

Once you complete the questions and record the results for day 1, rehearse any incorrectly answered questions with the patient. Prepare them for the memory questions which will start from day 2 of testing.

**From day 2 of testing**

From the second day of testing onwards, administer all 12 questions. Repeat the questions from day 1, then ask the below questions, taking note of the relevant prompts to clarify their responses. Record the results on the scoresheet.

**Q8. Have you seen my face before?**

This question requires a simple yes/no answer. Even if the patient answers "no" to this question, Question 9 should still be asked.

**Example of alternative script**

An acceptable alternative is "Have you seen me before?"

If the usual assessor is not available on the day of testing (either because it is the weekend or because of an unplanned absence), present a photograph of the usual assessor along with 2 other staff photographs – people of similar appearance. Ask the patient "Who do you have to remember?"

**Q9. What is my name?**

Only the first name is required.

If the patient fails to respond spontaneously, give them a choice of 3 names. The options should start with the same letter and have the same number of syllables.

For example: Lisa, Linda or Lesley.

**Example of alternative script**

If using the photograph in the absence of the usual assessor, ask "What is their name?"

**Q10, 11 & 12. What were the 3 pictures [you were shown/you selected] yesterday?**

The patient scores one point for each correctly named picture card.

If the patient can spontaneously recall only one or 2 pictures, use the alternative script outlined below to pick the remaining picture(s).

Score one point for each picture that is correct, regardless of whether it was recalled spontaneously or recognised following the prompt.

**Example of alternative script**

If the patient cannot spontaneously recall all 3 picture cards from the previous day, show them the A4 3x3 layout (or place all 9 picture cards face-up on the table) as a prompt. The patient must correctly identify the 3 target pictures, either by naming them, pointing to them, or by saying yes/no as they are shown them one at a time. Different versions of the A4 3x3 layout should be used as a prompt (or a different distribution of the 9 pictures if physical cards are being used) to ensure the patient is recalling the picture rather than its position on the page.

When the patient scores 12 out of 12 on the test, change the pictures to be remembered. Record the new pictures and the date they were chosen on the scoresheet.

## Rehearsing with the patient

At the end of testing, rehearse the correct answers with the patient for the following day. Rehearsing involves the following:

1. Go through the incorrect items with the patient. For example: "John, you got a couple of items wrong: today is Monday; and it is morning".
2. Remind the patient what they need to remember for the following day.
3. Introduce the patient to a set of new pictures if they have scored 12 out of 12 (by slowly showing and naming the 3 new pictures and asking the patient to repeat them).
4. Say, "John, I will be coming to see you tomorrow and I want you to remember my name – Lesley".

If you know a different assessor will be administering the test on the following day, then show the patient a photograph of yourself, and use the instruction "John, I will not be coming to see you tomorrow, but I still want you to remember me by this, my photograph, and that my name is Lesley".

Check whether the patient has encoded the memory items properly. Show the patient the 3 pictures again and say, "John, I want you to remember my name, Lesley, and the 3 pictures I have shown you - bird, flower and cup".