

## **Soundbite Script – Testing for dementia**

**Andrea Shewalter, nurse practitioner, OSF HealthCare Illinois Neurological Institute**

“With dementia, it's a short term, memory-deficit, but usually long term is intact. People will forget what they ate for breakfast that day and they may forget having a specific conversation with a family member that morning or the day before, but they'll be able to tell you what they did 25 years ago and be able to reminisce with stories like that.”

**Andrea Shewalter, nurse practitioner, OSF HealthCare Illinois Neurological Institute**

“When patients come in we refer them for a neuro psychological evaluation, where the psychologist reviews the 12 different domains of the brain through different systems and assessments. And they can come up with a potential diagnosis and are able to tell us what part of the brain is having a deficit or what deficit of the brain is occurring.”

**Andrea Shewalter, nurse practitioner, OSF HealthCare Illinois Neurological Institute**

“I would refer anyone for neuropsychological testing, where they can help determine what areas of the brain are being affected. And then we usually send the patient for imaging to make sure that there's nothing from a pathological standpoint that's going on in the brain. Is there a brain tumor? Is there Lyme's disease? Is there some sort of disease that is affecting this? We can also look at the structures of the brain to be able to tell if there a lot of shrinkage for their age. Is the brain compensating due to the atrophy or the shrinkage of the brain?”

**Andrea Shewalter, nurse practitioner, OSF HealthCare Illinois Neurological Institute**

“We try to treat dementia as naturally as possible. That's why we recommend the exercise, the increase in socialization, and the brain healthy diet, because it is what you make of it. If you just sit in a house and don't use your brain or challenge your brain and let the world go by, you often have generally worse outcomes than if you were to face this head on. Do the steps that we naturally recommend to decrease the rate at which your memory declines.”