

Assessment and tests

The purpose of assessment and testing is to find out:

- whether the person has a stroke and not some other disorder (see page 24)
- what caused the stroke and which part of the brain is affected
- whether the person has an underlying disorder that contributed to the stroke
- what risk factors are present.

Tests may include:

- blood tests to check for disease or abnormal clotting
- chest x-ray to check for any heart or lung abnormalities
- electrocardiogram (ECG) to test heart rhythm
- echocardiogram to image the heart (used if a clot is suspected to have come from a heart valve or chamber) for heart function
- CT and/or MRI scan (brain x-ray) to examine the damaged area of brain
- Carotid ultrasound to look for partial blockage of the arteries in the neck which can cause some types of stroke
- tests to find out what functions (such as movement) may have been affected.

Other tests may be needed, for example if the cause of the stroke is not obvious or there are unusual aspects. On the basis of the information gained from the assessment and tests, a treatment programme is worked out.