

# When you are tested for a neurological problem in the brain



**Your doctor has asked you to be tested for neurological problems in your brain. This fact sheet tells you what is happening to you and what to watch for while waiting for your test results.**

## Why do I need these tests?

Your doctor thinks your brain didn't function well at some point. This causes what are called "neurological" problems, which can vary a lot, including:

- weakness
- problems with vision (blurred vision, loss of sight) or with language (difficulty speaking normally)
- numbness in the arm, hand, leg, or foot
- problems with balance or dizziness

## What causes this problem?

It could be that blood flow was blocked for a short time in one part of your brain. This is called a "transient ischemic attack" (TIA). The problems can clear up within minutes or hours.

The TIA is caused by a clot that blocks a blood vessel (artery) in the brain, but dissolves quickly.

The clot can come from a blood vessel in the brain, from the carotid artery (an artery in the neck), or from the heart.

Other causes can sometimes produce the same symptoms.

## What is the most serious complication?

In the hours following a TIA, there is a higher risk of having a stroke (cerebrovascular accident, or CVA). This also involves a blood clot, but it doesn't dissolve as quickly. The area of the brain fed by this clogged blood vessel begins to die. This can result in permanent neurological disorders.

## What are the tests for?

The tests will show if you really had a TIA or if there is some other problem. If it was a TIA, this will help to make sure it is treated as soon as possible. This is the best way to prevent a stroke.



## What symptoms should I be watching for?

The tests and consultations can take several days. In the meantime, **call 9-1-1 or go to the emergency room right away** if you have any of the following symptoms:

- weakness or inability to move an arm or leg (paralysis)
- difficulty speaking
- loss of vision
- problems with balance or dizziness

## What can I do to make my tests go more smoothly?

To make sure your follow-up goes well:

- Go to all your tests and consultations.
- Arrive at least 20 minutes early.
- Use the checklist below.

After you have completed all your tests, you'll see a specialist in neurology.

## Who can I contact for help or to ask questions?

For any question related to your health, you can call a nurse at the Health Patient CHUM Hotline (ligne Santé Patient).

> **514 890-8086**

This service is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. When calling, be sure to have your health insurance card on hand.



### USEFUL RESOURCES

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our website  
**[chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante](http://chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante)**

## MY APPOINTMENTS

| APPOINTMENTS                                    | LOCATION | LOCATION                                                                                                                | DATE | TIME |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| Blood tests                                     |          |                                                                                                                         |      |      |
| Neurology consultation                          |          |                                                                                                                         |      |      |
| CT scan of brain                                |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Wear comfortable clothing and shoes.</li><li>- Eat a light breakfast.</li></ul> |      |      |
| Special carotid artery scanner (carotid duplex) |          |                                                                                                                         |      |      |
| Electro-cardiography (ECG)                      |          |                                                                                                                         |      |      |

*The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.*

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