Screening for Stroke

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En Español (Spanish Version)

The purpose of screening is early diagnosis and treatment. Screening tests are usually administered to people without current symptoms, but who may be at high risk for certain diseases or conditions.

Screening Guidelines or Tests

There are no screening guidelines for stroke. There are no tests designed to detect a stroke before you have symptoms. A stroke comes on too quickly.

But, there are warning signs and symptoms that can alert you to the need for additional testing to see if you are at higher risk for a stroke. Transient ischemic attacks (TIAs) are brief episodes where blood flow to a particular area of the brain is halted. This leads to temporary symptoms of a stroke. Since no permanent damage is done, these events may serve as warning signs that tests need to be done.

Similarly, certain heart-related symptoms (eg, palpitations, temporary dizziness) may be symptoms of atrial fibrillation. This condition could put you at higher risk for developing a stroke. Your doctor may do tests to determine your risk. These tests may include:

- Carotid ultrasound
- Electrocardiogram (EKG)
- Echocardiogram

In addition, at your routine physical exam, your doctor does some screening tests to detect conditions that increase your risk of stroke and heart disease. These include blood pressure measurement, cholesterol tests, and blood glucose tests for diabetes. There are also screening questionnaires that can help predict your risk for stroke. These can be a helpful starting point for beginning a discussion with your doctor about lowering your risk factors for a stroke.

REFERENCES:

