

NIH Stroke Scale

with notes for the comatose and intubated patients

Comatose Patient:

- Defined by a patient with a 3 on item 1a (LOC)
- Is a patient that makes no movement (other than reflexive posturing) in response to noxious stimulation
- Can only score items 2 & 3 (oculocephalic move and blink to threat)
- Remaining items receive the highest score except for 7 (ataxia). Ataxia receives a zero since it can't be tested.

Intubated Patient:

- Best to have sedation decreased in order to elicit best response
- Default score of 1 on item 1b (LOC questions)
- Untestable (UN) for item 10 (dysarthria) due to physical barrier

1a. Level of consciousness (no default score for intubation)	Alert	0
	Drowsy (needs verbal stimulation)	1
	Not alert (requires repeated/painful stimulation)	2
	Unresponsive (reflex motor response only = comatose)	3
1b. LOC Questions (month, age)	Both correct	0
	One correct (default of 1 if intubated)	1
	Both incorrect (if comatose)	2
1c. LOC Commands (open/close eyes, hand)	Performs both tasks	0
	Performs one task	1
	Performs neither (if comatose)	2
2. Best gaze (Track EOM, test oculocephalic movement)	Normal	0
	Partial gaze palsy (abnormal gaze in one or both eyes)	1
	Forced deviation (total gaze paresis)	2
3. Visual (test visual quadrants, upper and lower, can use visual threat)	Normal	0
	Partial hemianopia (blind in ¼ of visual field, bilaterally)	1
	Complete hemianopia (blind in ½ of visual field, bilaterally)	2
	Bilateral hemianopia (total blindness)	3
4. Facial palsy (show teeth, raise eyebrows)	Normal	0
	Minor paralysis (flat nasolabial fold, asymmetry with smiling)	1
	Partial paralysis (lower face)	2
	Complete paralysis - upper and lower face (if comatose)	3

5. Motor arm (elevate arm for 10 seconds)	No drift	0	R
	Drift (arm falls before 10 seconds but doesn't hit bed)	1	
	Some effort against gravity (drifts down toward and hits bed)	2	
	No effort against gravity (limb falls, able to shrug)	3	L
	No movement (if comatose)	4	
	Amputation	0	
6. Motor leg (elevate leg 30° for 5 seconds)	No drift	0	R
	Drift (leg falls before 5 seconds but doesn't hit bed)	1	
	Some effort against gravity (drifts down toward and hits bed)	2	
	No effort against gravity (limb falls, some hip movement)	3	L
	No movement (if comatose)	4	
	Amputation	0	
7. Limb ataxia (finger-nose, heel to shin, perform on both slides)	Absent (no ataxia or unable to test or if comatose)	0	
	Present in one limb	1	
	Present in two limbs	2	
	Amputation or joint fusion	0	
8. Sensory (test face, arm, & leg; compare R to L)	Normal	0	
	Partial loss (less sharp or dull on affected side)	1	
	Severe loss (not aware of being touched (if comatose))	2	
9. Best language (name items or read sentences on card) (if intubated write response)	No aphasia (normal speech)	0	
	Mild-moderate aphasia (reduced fluency and/or comprehension)	1	
	Severe aphasia (fragmentary expression)	2	
	Mute, global aphasia (if comatose)	3	
10. Dysarthria (slurring of speech)	Normal	0	
	Mild-moderate slurring (understood with some difficulty)	1	
	Severe slurring (unintelligible speech (if comatose))	2	
	Intubated (or other physical barrier)	0	
11. Extinction and inattention (visual, tactile, & spatial inattention)	No abnormality	0	
	Personal inattention to 1 modality:	1	
	Profound inattention to more than 1 modality (if comatose)	2	