Glucose Test

A glucose test measures the amount of sugar in your blood. Low blood sugar is a common complication of many diabetes treatments, and can mimic stroke symptoms. High blood sugar levels are a common complication after a stroke. If you have had a stroke, it is important that your blood sugar be monitored and treated with insulin if necessary: very high blood sugar can cause further damage to your blood vessels and brain.

See our article on diabetes for more information on the relationship between blood sugar and stroke.

Serum Electrolytes

This test measures the amount of different electrolytes (molecules that carry an electric charge) in the blood, including sodium, potassium, and calcium.

A serum electrolyte test is done in stroke patients because an abnormal electrolyte balance can mimic stroke symptoms. For example, low levels of sodium and potassium can cause confusion, paralysis, and muscle spasms. While you are being treated for stroke, a serum electrolyte test helps your doctor make sure your body has enough water (you are hydrated) and that you maintain a good electrolyte balance, ensuring your body is equipped to recover properly.

A serum electrolyte test can also indicate if you have kidney problems, which may affect the choice of stroke medications, treatments, and diagnostic tests. People with kidney problems may be at risk if they receive a diagnostic test (such as angiography) that uses a dye (called a contrast) to visualize the arteries in the brain; the dye can be toxic to the kidneys in certain patients.

Next: Cholesterol Tests & CRP

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