

GLASGOW COMA SCALE



Neurological System: Level of Consciousness

The Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS) is a reliable approach to assess an individual's neurological state.



Eye-opening



Verbal response



Motor response

How to Use the GCS

1. Observe the client for eye-opening, language, and body movements.
2. If client unable to be tested due to medications, paralysis, intubation, or similar, factors score the section as NT (Not Testable).
3. Calculate the final GCS score by adding the corresponding values for eye-opening, verbal responses, and motor responses.

The GCS Score Can Range From 3 to 15

Least neurologically responsive **3** ← → **15** Most neurologically responsive

NURSING HINT:

A GCS score of 8 or less indicates the client may be unable to protect the airway and will need support.

Severe neurological concerns:

GCS 3–8

Moderate neurological concerns:

GCS 9–12

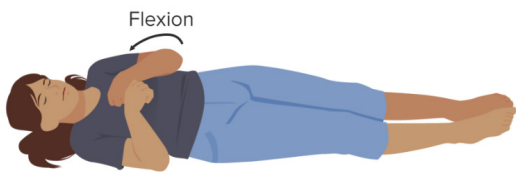
Mild neurological concerns:

GCS 13–14

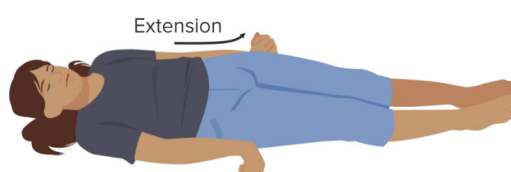
The GCS scoring scale can be used for clients aged 3+.



Open spontaneously	4	Oriented	5	Obeys commands	6
Open to verbal commands	3	Confused	4	Localizing pressure	5
Open to pressure	2	Inappropriate words	3	Withdrawal from pressure	4
No eye opening	1	Incomprehensible sounds	2	Flexion to pressure (decorticate)	3
Closed by local factor	NT	No verbal response	1	Extension to pressure	2
		Non-testable (factor interfering with communication)	NT	No motor response	1
				Non-testable (paralyzed or other limiting factor)	NT



Decorticate



Decerebrate

EXAM HINT:

The GCS does not assess pupil dilation or cranial nerve function. You can remember decorticate by thinking of someone hugging their “core”.

NOTES

