



YOUR BLOOD TESTS

You and your Doctor can learn a great deal about your health by testing a sample of your blood. Lab tests help in several ways. Sometimes test results will be abnormal before you have symptoms, and when you have symptoms, lab test results help confirm that a problem exists.

A normal test result is just as significant as an abnormal result. A normal result does not mean that the test was unnecessary. When a result is normal, it not only helps to rule out disease, but it also establishes a baseline for you. Each person has his or her own baseline "normal". A person's own result is the best baseline for monitoring any change that takes place in the future.

What follows is a brief description of the typical tests that may be included in a testing profile. These descriptions will help you to better understand your lab test results so that you may have a more meaningful discussion with your doctor. You should not rely on this information for diagnostic treatment. These descriptions are not intended to be a complete listing of all conditions medically relevant to each test. Always consult your doctor regarding your lab tests.

ALT (SGPT) This is measured to see if the liver is damaged or diseased. Low levels of ALT are normally found in the blood. However, when the liver is damaged or diseased, it releases ALT into the bloodstream, which makes ALT levels go up. Most increases in ALT levels are caused by liver damage.

Scotts Bluff County 

*Regional  West
Medical Center*

Your Blood Test



Scotts Bluff County
Health Department
and
Regional West Medical Center
Community Health Department

Phone (308) 630-1559
Fax (308) 630-1728

Albumin This important protein keeps water inside your blood vessels. With a low level, water can leak out of your blood vessels into other parts of your body and cause swelling. A low level can be caused by malnutrition, too much water in the body, liver disease, kidney disease, severe injury such as burns or major bone fractures, and slow bleeding over a long period of time

Total Bilirubin Bilirubin is the pigment in the blood that makes your blood plasma or serum yellow. When the bilirubin level in the blood is high, the whites of your eyes and your skin may become yellow – this is known as jaundice.

Total Protein This is a measure of the total amount of protein in your blood. A low or high reading does not indicate a specific disease, but it does indicate that some additional tests may be required to determine if there is a problem

Triglycerides This is a blood fat largely derived from dietary fat absorption, and to a limited extent, related to a higher risk of heart disease. You must not eat for at least 12 hours to obtain an accurate result for this test.

Cholesterol Cholesterol is an essential blood fat, but too high a level of this blood fat is associated with a higher risk of heart disease and clogged blood vessels

HDL Cholesterol High-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol is sometimes describes as “good” cholesterol. One of the important roles of HDL cholesterol in your body is to carry cholesterol away from your arteries to your liver. The more HDL cholesterol you have, the more cholesterol can be carried away and not clog your arteries.

LDL Low-density cholesterol carries mostly fat and only a small amount of protein from the liver to other parts of the body. It is sometimes called "bad cholesterol." A high LDL cholesterol level may increase your chances of developing heart disease.

Cholesterol/HDL Ratio This number is obtained by comparing the total cholesterol number to the HDL number. The higher this number, the greater the risk of coronary heart disease.

VLDL (Very low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol contains very little protein. The main purpose of VLDL is to distribute the triglyceride produced by your liver. A high VLDL cholesterol level can cause the buildup of cholesterol in your arteries and increases your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Glucose Glucose is the chief source of energy for all living organisms. High glucose levels after 12 hours of fasting may suggest diabetes. Low blood glucose, on the other hand, may be seen with certain tumors or with liver disease.

BUN (Blood Urea Nitrogen) BUN is a waste product derived from protein breakdown in the liver. It is excreted by the kidneys. When your kidneys are not working well, the level of BUN in the blood will rise. Dehydration and blood loss can also cause a high BUN level. A low BUN level may be caused by liver disease, a low protein diet, or too much water intake.

Creatinine The blood concentration of Creatinine depends upon two things – the amount of muscle you have and the ability of your kidneys to excrete the Creatinine. High levels usually indicate deterioration in kidney function

Calcium Calcium is one of the most important elements in the body. It is very important for the proper function of nerves, enzymes, muscles and blood clotting. High levels can be caused by bone disease, excess intake of antacids and milk, excess intake of vitamin D and overactivity of the thyroid gland

Uric Acid Uric acid levels are useful in the diagnosis of gout. Patients with gout may develop arthritis and/or kidney stones. Diuretics and salicylates (aspirin) may also increase uric acid. Uric acid levels may be increased during kidney failure, with certain tumors, and as a response to stress and alcohol.

Sodium This element plays an important role in salt and water balance in the body. A low level in the blood can be caused by too much water intake, heart failure, or kidney failure because of fluid retention. A low level can also be caused by loss of sodium in diarrhea, fluid, or vomit. A high level can be caused by too much intake of salt or by not having enough intake of water.

Potassium Its role is to maintain water balance inside the cells and help in the transmission of nerve impulses. Low levels may be found in patients on diuretics or not receiving enough dietary potassium. A high level can be found in kidney disease or over use of supplements.

TSH Determine whether the thyroid gland is functioning properly. An underactive thyroid gland (hypothyroidism) can cause symptoms such as weight gain, tiredness, dry skin, constipation, a feeling of being too cold, or frequent menstrual periods. An overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism) can cause symptoms such as weight loss, rapid heart rate, nervousness, diarrhea, a feeling of being too hot, or irregular menstrual periods.

