

What Lab Tests Mean

Test	What it is
Albumin	It is a protein made in your liver. This blood test checks how well your liver is working.
Alk p-tase (alkaline phosphatase)	It is an enzyme in your body. This blood test can help tell how well your liver is working.
AST (aspartate amino transferase)	It is an enzyme in your body. This blood test can help tell how well your heart, liver and kidneys are working.
Bicarbonate	It is an electrolyte that helps control the amount of acid in your blood. This test checks the acidity level of your blood.
Bilirubin	It is made when red blood cells break down at the end of their life cycle. Your liver filters it out of your body. This blood test checks how well your liver is working.
BUN (blood urea nitrogen)	It is a waste product in your blood. Your kidneys filter it out of your body. This urine test checks how well your kidneys are working.
Calcium	It is needed for your muscles to tighten, heart to work, blood to clot, and nerves to work. This blood test checks the calcium level in your body.
Chloride	It is an electrolyte and works with sodium to influence your water balance. This blood test checks the chloride in your body.
Cholesterol	It is a fat substance made in your body and found in certain foods. It is important for energy, making hormones, making bile acids and cells. High levels can cause clogged arteries and a higher risk of heart disease. This blood test checks the total cholesterol in your body.
CPK (creatinine phosphokinase)	It is an enzyme found in your heart, muscles and brain tissue. This blood test checks for heart and muscle injury.

Test	What it is
Creatinine	It is a waste product in your blood. Your kidneys filter it out of your body. This blood test checks how well your kidneys are working.
Creatinine clearance	This test measures creatinine levels in both a sample of blood and a sample of urine from a 24-hour urine collection. The results are used to calculate the amount of creatinine that has been cleared from the blood and passed into the urine. This calculation allows for a general evaluation of the amount of blood that is being filtered by the kidneys in a 24-hour time period.
Glucose	It is the energy source that helps your body cells to live. It is formed when your food digests (breaks down). Your body makes insulin to keep the glucose level in check. This blood test checks the glucose level in your body.
HDL (high density lipoprotein)	It is the “good” cholesterol that carries cholesterol from your blood to your liver. This blood test checks the HDL level in your body.
Hematocrit	Hematocrit means “to separate blood.” This blood test tells the percentage of red blood cells in your blood.
Hemoglobin	It is the main part of red blood cells. It helps deliver oxygen to your cells. This blood test measures your blood’s hemoglobin level.
INR (international normalized ratio)	It is a measure of your blood’s clotting ability. This blood test checks how well your body responds to medicine like warfarin.
LD or LDH (lactic acid dehydrogenase)	It is an enzyme involved in energy production, and is found in almost all of your body’s cells. The highest levels are in the cells of your heart, liver, muscles, kidneys, lungs, and in blood cells. This test is used to help detect a condition causing tissue damage, such as a blood or liver disease, and to monitor its progress.
LDL (low density lipoprotein)	It is the “bad” cholesterol that carries cholesterol to your body’s cells. High levels of LDL can narrow blood vessels. This blood test checks the LDL level in your body.
Magnesium	It is a mineral you need for energy, to build proteins, help your muscles work, and help your blood clot. This blood test checks the magnesium level in your body.
Phosphorus	It is a mineral you need for bones and body cells to live and grow. This blood test checks the phosphorous level in your body.

Test	What it is
Platelets	These blood cells are needed to help your blood clot. When levels are low, you can have bleeding that is difficult to stop. This blood test checks the level of platelets in your body.
Potassium	It is an element (electrolyte) that helps your heart maintain a regular heartbeat. Your kidneys control the amount of potassium in your blood. This blood test checks the level of potassium in your body.
Protein	It is important to keep your cells and muscles healthy. This blood test checks the level of protein in your body.
PSA (prostatic specific antigen)	It is a protein that is made by the prostate gland in men. When a man's prostate is enlarged or has prostate cancer, the PSA level can become high. This blood test checks the level of PSA in your body.
Sodium	It is an element (electrolyte) that causes your body to hold (retain) fluid. Your kidneys control the amount of sodium in your blood. This blood test checks the level of sodium in your body.
Triglycerides	It is a fat substance made in your liver. It is important for giving you energy. High levels can cause clogged arteries and a higher risk of heart disease. This blood test checks the triglyceride level in your body. It may mean you are having problems with your liver or pancreas.
TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone)	This blood test is done to see how well your thyroid gland is working.
Uric acid	Uric acid is a waste product in your blood. Your kidneys filter it out of your body. This test checks the level of uric acid in your blood.
White blood cell count	These blood cells help your body fight off infections. This blood test checks the level of white blood cells in your body.