

Lab Results Quick Reference Guide

The most common lab tests explained in plain English — by Sonya M., CLS

■ This guide is for educational purposes only. Always consult your healthcare provider before making medical decisions.

Complete Blood Count (CBC)

The CBC measures the cells in your blood and is one of the most common lab tests ordered.

- WBC (White Blood Cells): 4.5–11.0 K/uL — fights infection; high may mean infection or inflammation
- RBC (Red Blood Cells): 4.2–5.4 M/uL (women) / 4.7–6.1 M/uL (men) — carries oxygen
- Hemoglobin: 12.0–16.0 g/dL (women) / 13.5–17.5 g/dL (men) — low may indicate anemia
- Hematocrit: 37–47% (women) / 42–52% (men) — percentage of blood that is red cells
- Platelets: 150–400 K/uL — helps blood clot; low may cause bruising or bleeding

Basic Metabolic Panel (BMP)

The BMP checks your blood chemistry, kidney function, and blood sugar.

- Glucose: 70–100 mg/dL (fasting) — blood sugar level; high may indicate diabetes
- BUN (Blood Urea Nitrogen): 7–20 mg/dL — kidney waste product
- Creatinine: 0.6–1.2 mg/dL — kidney function marker
- Sodium: 136–145 mEq/L — regulates fluid balance
- Potassium: 3.5–5.1 mEq/L — important for heart and muscle function
- Calcium: 8.5–10.5 mg/dL — bone health, nerve and muscle function

Thyroid Panel

Thyroid tests check how well your thyroid gland is working.

- TSH: 0.4–4.0 mIU/L — the main screening test for thyroid function
- Free T4: 0.8–1.8 ng/dL — thyroid hormone level
- Free T3: 2.3–4.2 pg/mL — active form of thyroid hormone

High TSH = underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism). Low TSH = overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism).

Lipid Panel (Cholesterol)

The lipid panel measures fats in your blood and assesses heart disease risk.

- Total Cholesterol: < 200 mg/dL is desirable

- LDL (Bad Cholesterol): < 100 mg/dL is optimal
- HDL (Good Cholesterol): > 60 mg/dL is protective
- Triglycerides: < 150 mg/dL is normal

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- Which of my results are outside the normal range?
- What do these abnormal results mean for my health?
- Do I need any follow-up tests?
- Should I make any lifestyle changes based on these results?
- When should I have these tests repeated?

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