

Routine Blood Tests when you are a Hemodialysis Patient



UHN

When you are on hemodialysis, we need to do regular blood tests. These tests tell you and your health care team how you are doing. This brochure will tell you about some of the blood tests that we do to watch your condition.

You will regularly have the following blood tests:

Albumin

Albumin is a type of body protein. It comes from the food you eat. If you have a low albumin, it could mean that you are not eating enough protein or calories. When you have a low albumin, you may have a hard time fighting infection.

Target: 35 – 45 g/L

Calcium (Ca⁺⁺)

Calcium comes from dairy products. It is important for many reasons such as strong bones and teeth as well as other body functions.

Target: 2.20 – 2.60 mmol/L

Phosphate

Phosphate comes from the proteins and dairy food that we eat. We find the phosphate in our system after these types of food have broken down. We need to monitor your phosphate levels to make sure that your body has the right balance of phosphate.

Target: less than 1.8 mmol/L

Hemoglobin (Hb A1C)

This blood test tells us about your sugar control. We do Hb A1C monthly on our diabetic patients.

Target: 0.6

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Parathyroid Hormone (PTH)

Poor balance of calcium and phosphate in your body can lead to high levels of PTH. High PTH can cause bone disease. This is because PTH causes calcium to be removed from bones.

Target: less than 30 mmol/L

Potassium (K⁺)

Potassium is necessary for the proper function of nerves and muscles. Healthy kidneys remove excess amounts. Too little or too much potassium may cause heart problems that can be fatal.

Target: 3.5 – 5.5 mmol/L

Complete Blood Cell Count (CBC)

A complete blood cell count looks at all the parts of your blood cells. Every part is important. In dialysis, we focus on your hemoglobin (Hb). Hb is the part of the red blood cells that carries oxygen to all cells in the body. If you have anemia, this is a key blood test to help us treat you.

Target: 110 – 120 g/L

Cytotoxic Antibodies

We take this blood test every 3 months for those patients who are on the Transplant Waiting list. This is the blood test that we use to match you with potential donors when they become available. We freeze and store your blood sample in the Tissue Typing Lab.

Creatinine

This is a waste product from muscle breakdown. The kidneys normally get rid of creatinine. The amount in the blood stream varies from person to person. Measuring your creatinine levels tells us how well your treatment is working.

Digoxin and Dilantin Levels

If you are on either of these medications, we will measure how much is in your bloodstream. These tests tell us if you are taking the right amount of medication.

Ferritin And Iron Saturation

Both of these tests measure your iron levels but in different ways. It is important for you to have adequate iron stores to keep up your hemoglobin levels.

Target Ferritin: greater than 100ug/L

Target Iron Saturation: greater than 0.2



These are the most common tests that you will have. Sometimes you may require blood tests that are not listed here. Your doctor or nurse can tell you about other blood tests. Ask one of them if you have questions.

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