

Blood Test List Cheat Sheet

Blood tests are a vital tool in modern medicine, offering insights into the complex workings of the human body. These tests can diagnose diseases, track the progress of medical conditions, and evaluate the effectiveness of treatments:

Complete blood count (CBC)

This test analyzes various components of the blood, aiding in diagnosing conditions such as anemia, infection, and various disorders. A minor blood sample is extracted from a vein, usually in the arm. Typically, fasting is not necessary.

Basic metabolic panel (BMP)

The BMP is a set of tests that provides information about your muscles (including the heart), bones, and organs, such as the kidneys and liver. This panel typically measures glucose levels, calcium, and electrolytes.

Lipid panel

A lipid panel measures the levels of different cholesterol and triglycerides in the blood to assess the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases.

Liver function tests

A group of tests that evaluate the health of the liver by measuring levels of liver enzymes, proteins, and bilirubin in the blood.

Thyroid function tests

These tests help to assess how well the thyroid gland is working by measuring thyroid hormone levels in the blood, aiding in diagnosing conditions such as hyperthyroidism or hypothyroidism.

Hemoglobin A1C test

A Hemoglobin A1C test measures the average level of blood sugar (glucose) over the past two to three months. This test is crucial for managing diabetes, as it helps to determine how well blood sugar is being controlled and to make any necessary adjustments in treatment.

Coagulation panel

Coagulation tests, such as Prothrombin Time (PT/INR) and Activated Partial Thromboplastin Time (aPTT), assess the blood's ability to clot. These tests are important for patients who take blood-thinning medications or have conditions that affect clotting.

Electrolyte panel

This test measures the levels of electrolytes in the blood, such as sodium, potassium, chloride, and bicarbonate. It can indicate various conditions, from dehydration to kidney or heart problems.

Blood enzyme tests

Blood enzyme tests, especially for cardiac enzymes like troponin, can help diagnose a heart attack or other heart conditions. Elevated levels of certain enzymes can signal heart damage.

How to Prepare your patient for a blood test

Blood tests are important diagnostic tools used to gather information about a patient's health. They can help identify potential medical conditions and monitor the effectiveness of treatments.

However, in order to get accurate results, proper preparation is necessary:

- **Fasting:**
For some tests, fasting is required in order to obtain accurate results. This means avoiding food and beverages for a certain period of time before the test, usually between 9-12 hours.
- **Avoiding certain medications:**
Some medications can interfere with blood test results. Your patient may be advised to avoid taking them before the test.
- **Drinking water:**
Drinking plenty of water before a blood test can help make it easier to find a vein for the blood draw.
- **Wearing comfortable clothing:**
Your patient should wear loose-fitting clothing that allows easy access to their arm, as most blood tests require a blood sample to be taken from a vein in the arm.
- **Relaxation techniques:**
Blood tests can be anxiety-inducing for some patients. Encourage your patient to practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or listening to calming music before the test to help reduce anxiety.

During the blood test

During the blood test, it's important to make your patient feel as comfortable and relaxed as possible. Some tips for achieving this include:

- **Talking them through the process:**
Explain each step of the blood test procedure to your patient so they know what to expect.
- **Encouraging deep breathing:**
Deep breathing can help relax the body and make the experience less uncomfortable.

- **Distracting them:**

Engage your patient in conversation or have them focus on an object in the room to take their mind off the blood draw.

- **Using numbing cream:**

If your patient is particularly sensitive to pain, you may suggest using a numbing cream on the skin before the blood draw.

- **Providing aftercare instructions:**

After the test is complete, provide your patient with any necessary aftercare instructions, such as applying pressure to the puncture site or avoiding certain activities for a period of time.

- **Offering a reward:**

For younger patients or those who may be more anxious about the blood test, offering a small reward afterward can help make the experience more positive. This can be something as simple as a sticker or a small toy.

Interpreting results

Once the blood sample has been collected, it will be sent to a laboratory for analysis. The blood test results can provide valuable information about your patient's overall health and any potential medical conditions.

It's important to remember that each individual's results may vary and should be interpreted by a healthcare professional. Certain factors, such as age, gender, and underlying health conditions, can affect the results of a blood test.

If any abnormal or unexpected results are found, your patient may need further testing or consult a specialist. It's important for patients to follow up with their healthcare provider to discuss and understand their results.