

Questions to Ask About Your Lab Tests



Lab tests are important tools to stay healthy. Here are tips for when you talk with your health care provider about your results. This includes what questions you may need to ask to understand your results.



What are lab tests?

Lab tests are tools for managing your health, especially if you have diabetes or kidney disease. These tests most often check samples of blood or urine. Sometimes, they test other body fluids or tissues.



Why are lab tests and results important?

Lab tests and results help your health care provider:

- Check your overall health
- Find problems before they get worse
- See how well your treatments are working
- Know if your treatment plan, including your medications, eating plan, or activity level, needs changes



What should I do to understand my lab results?

To get the most out of your lab results, you need to understand them. To do this, be prepared to ask health care provider questions and to write down their answers.

Here are some helpful questions to ask:

To know which tests were done and why:

- What does this test check for?
- Why is this test important to me?

To understand what the results of those tests mean:

- Are my results in the normal range?
- What do the results mean for my health?
- Do any of the results concern you?

To learn what happens next based on your test results:

- What changes can I make to improve my results?
- Do I need to change what I eat, my physical activity, or medication?
- Do I need any kind of treatment?

To plan your next steps to move forward:

- When should I get tested again?
- How often should I be tested?
- How can I keep track of my progress?



Other tips for your health care provider visits:

Bring a caregiver or loved one with you to health care provider visits.

They can help you:

- Ask questions
- Take notes
- Understand what happens next

If you are more comfortable speaking a language other than English, ask your health care provider for translation services.

Remember, you are your own biggest supporter. Ask these questions, along with others you may have, to take an active part in your health care.

Where can I learn more?

For more kidney health tips, visit diabetes.org/Kidney.

