



Understanding Your Blood Tests

This article will explain why your blood tests are important and give you an introduction to understanding them. If you have questions about blood tests, be sure to speak with your healthcare provider.

WHY IT'S HELPFUL

When you have MM, you may feel like you are constantly undergoing tests. This article will provide a context for you to understand why these tests are both necessary and helpful to your treatment.

KEY POINTS

1. Your blood tests can tell your doctor or nurse a great deal about your multiple myeloma (MM), including whether it is under control and how your current treatment is affecting your body
2. Your doctor or nurse will need to test your blood on a regular schedule
3. One thing your doctor will need to track is your M-protein, an abnormal antibody that cannot fight infections

MULTIPLE MYELOMA AND BLOOD TESTS

Your blood tests can tell your doctor or nurse:

- If your MM is under control
- How MM is affecting your body
- Why you may be feeling certain symptoms
- How treatment is affecting your body

UNDERSTANDING YOUR BLOOD TESTS

Testing your blood can tell you and your doctor or nurse if you have enough red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets:

- Red blood cells carry oxygen to every part of your body
- White blood cells help fight infections
- Platelets help stop bleeding

Blood tests also can determine if your bones may be getting weaker, increasing the risk of broken bones and pain. Another important blood test can tell if your plasma cells are making large amounts of the M-protein, an abnormal antibody that cannot fight infections.

COMMON BLOOD TESTS

Your doctor or nurse will need to test your blood on a regular schedule to see exactly how MM affects you.



Understanding Your Blood Tests

Here are some common and important blood tests that you may have to undergo:

Blood test	Why you may need this test
CBC or complete blood count	Measures the number of red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets in the blood
Chemistry/metabolic panel	Checks the level of certain substances such as calcium, serum creatinine, and liver enzymes. The results may show how MM is affecting your bones, heart, kidneys, and liver
Immunoglobulin levels	Helps to monitor MM by counting abnormal antibodies
Serum protein electrophoresis (SPEP)	Helps to monitor MM by measuring the abnormal monoclonal protein (M-protein) in the blood
Immunofixation	Helps to monitor MM by identifying the types of M-protein in the blood
Freelite™ Serum free light chain assay	Helps to monitor MM by measuring immunoglobulin light chains

UNDERSTANDING TEST RESULTS: Your blood test results may explain why you have certain symptoms.

Test results	Symptoms
Low red blood cells	Fatigue or exhaustion, sometimes with weakness, pale skin, and dizziness
Low white blood cells	More infections than normal
Low platelets	Easily bruised, more bleeding than normal when cut or scraped
High blood calcium	Increased thirst and frequent urination, loss of appetite and constipation, sleepy and sometimes confused
Increased monoclonal protein (M-protein)	The blood thickens and becomes sticky, which causes shortness of breath, chest pain, and confusion

Ask your doctor or nurse about your blood tests. They can tell you more about blood tests and test results. Your doctor or nurse can use your blood test results to help manage your MM symptoms.

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