



WHY DO YOU NEED BLOOD TESTS?

An easy-to-read guide



Lancet Laboratories

Lancet Laboratories is one of the leading pathology laboratories operating throughout South Africa and Africa.

Lancet operates in both the public and private healthcare environments and services business, insurance and industry. From our modest beginnings in the 1940s in the heart of central Johannesburg, we have grown rapidly and in 2013 Lancet conducted 2.1 million blood tests each month across South Africa.

Q. Why do I need blood tests?

Our blood shows us a great deal about our health. Blood tests are used to diagnose illness and are also useful as they can draw attention to health problems in their early stages. For example, measuring Cholesterol levels helps to identify one of the risks of heart disease, long before the condition becomes more serious.

Medical technologists use either whole blood or they separate the blood cells from the fluid which is called plasma or serum, to analyse it. A nurse needs to take a blood sample from you to conduct these tests.

Q. What are the risks of having blood tests?

Lancet Laboratories nurses use a new needle for each new patient, to do away with the risk of being infected. The most common risk is slight bruising and discomfort where the needle went in, but should go away shortly.

Q. How is the test carried out?

A nurse draws a small amount of blood from a vein in your arm using a thin needle. Some tests can also be done using a finger prick. Drawing blood usually takes just a few minutes and should not be painful.

Q. What do the results show?

Blood tests are used for many reasons. They can show whether you have a particular illness, or a mineral deficiency (shortage) such as iron. They can also show whether the levels of various substances in your blood, such as anti-retroviral medication, fall within the correct range and are working properly, and can show if your organs, such as your heart, liver and kidneys are working properly.

Q. Where do I go for a blood test?

Please visit the Lancet Laboratories website at www.lancet.co.za and click on "locate a lab" for a list of more than 200 laboratories and depots throughout South Africa. These addresses can be downloaded as electronic business cards, as PDF's or they can be e-mailed.

Q. How do I prepare for a blood test?

For some tests you will need to fast (go without food) for up to 12 hours before the test, and your doctor will tell you whether you need to do this.

Q. How long before I receive a result?

This can range from a few hours to a few weeks, depending on the tests you are having done. Our staff will be able to tell you how long your specific tests will take.

Q. How will I be billed for my blood tests?

Lancet will submit the account to your medical aid on your behalf. Should there be any shortfall, you are then responsible for settling the account.

If you do not have a medical aid, you need to pay Lancet in cash.

Q. Will my medical aid pay for my blood tests?

This depends on what medical aid package you are on. You might be expected to share the cost of the tests, by making a co-payment.

Q. Who do I contact should I have further questions?

Please call our national toll free number on 0861 Lancet.