

# WELLNESS SCREENING TEST EXPLANATION SHEET

We encourage you to share all lab results with your primary care provider.

## EXPLANATION OF BLOOD TESTS

**HEMOGLOBIN A1C:** A Hemoglobin A1c level is expressed as a percent and is used to evaluate the average amount of glucose in the blood over the last 2 to 3 months. This test may be used to screen for and diagnose diabetes or risk of developing diabetes.

**ALT:** This test is used to determine if a patient has liver damage. In healthy individuals, ALT levels in the blood are low and they rise in various disease states.

**CALCIUM:** A calcium test is ordered to screen for, diagnose and monitor a range of conditions relating to the bones, heart, nerves, kidneys and teeth. The test may also be ordered if a person has symptoms of parathyroid disorder, malabsorption or an overactive thyroid.

**CREATININE:** The creatinine blood test is used to assess kidney function. Almost all creatinine is filtered from the blood by the kidneys and released into the urine. Blood levels of creatinine are usually a good indicator of how well the kidneys are working.

**GLUCOSE:** A blood glucose test measures the amount of a sugar called glucose in a sample of blood. This is used for diagnosing diabetes.

**LIPID PANEL (CHOLESTEROL, TRIGLYCERIDES & HDL):** The lipid panel is used as part of a cardiac risk assessment to help determine an individual's risk of heart disease.

**POTASSIUM:** Many conditions affect potassium levels in the blood such as dehydration, vomiting, diarrhea, certain medications and how much potassium is ingested. Potassium is also tested while monitoring high blood pressure, kidney disease, water pills or heart medication.

**SODIUM:** Sodium is both a mineral and an electrolyte. It helps keep the balance of water inside and outside the body's cells. Numerous disease states can affect an individual's sodium level.

**THYROID STIMULATING HORMONE (TSH):** The thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) test is often the test of choice for evaluating thyroid function and/or symptoms of a thyroid disorder, including hyperthyroidism or hypothyroidism. It is part of the body's feedback system to maintain stable amounts of the thyroid hormones and to help control the rate at which the body uses energy.

**PROSTATE SPECIFIC ANTIGEN (PSA):** The PSA test may be used to screen both asymptomatic and symptomatic men for prostate cancer. The American Cancer Society, the American Urological Association and Gundersen Health System recommend that men discuss the advantages and disadvantages of PSA-based screening for prostate cancer with their healthcare provider before making an informed decision about whether to be screened or not.

**HEMATOLOGY WELLNESS:** Blood counts are often used as a broad screening test to determine an individual's general health status. White blood cells are the cells that are part of the body's defense system against infections and cancer and also play a role in allergies and inflammation. Red blood cells are the cells that transport oxygen throughout the body. Hemoglobin measures the total amount of the oxygen-carrying protein in the blood, which generally reflects the number of red blood cells in the blood. Hematocrit measures the percentage of a person's total blood volume that consists of red blood cells. Platelets are cell fragments that are vital for normal blood clotting.

For more information on blood tests, please visit [labtestsonline.org](http://labtestsonline.org)

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