



Kidney Q&A

4-12 months

Life Options Rehabilitation Program

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www.lifeoptions.org

Q: What can I learn from my regular blood tests, and who can help me?

A: You will have blood tests at least monthly to see how your dialysis is working. By tracking your results from test to test, you can learn how your food, fluids, and drugs affect how you feel.

A few of the common blood tests you have are:

- URR or Kt/V to see if you are getting enough dialysis. If you use peritoneal dialysis (PD), the quality of your peritoneal membrane will be tested and a creatinine clearance will also be checked.
- Hemoglobin to check for anemia, a shortage of red blood cells.
- Ferritin and transferrin saturation to check your iron storage.
- Potassium and sodium levels to be sure they are in the safe range.
- Albumin to make sure you have enough protein stores in your body.
- Calcium, phosphorus, and parathyroid hormone to check for bone disease.

What *I* can do to learn more about blood tests:

- ❑ Ask my dietitian what each of my lab tests is for and what the results mean. You should receive a written report of lab tests every month, with advice about how to improve any tests that may not meet your clinic's goals.
- ❑ Track my blood test results by keeping copies of my lab reports in a notebook or using a computer program to graph them.
- ❑ If my lab results are too high or too low, ask my team for advice on how to improve them.
- ❑ Visit module 7 of Kidney School™: *Understanding Kidney Lab Tests* at www.kidneyschool.org to learn more about my blood tests.

What can I learn from my regular blood tests, and who can help me?