

# Understanding your pet's blood work

Blood tests help us determine your pet's health status and causes of illness accurately, safely, and quickly and let us monitor the progress of medical treatments. A checkmark in any box indicates a significant abnormal finding on your pet's blood work. If you have questions, ask any staff member. We want you to understand our recommendations and be a partner in your pet's care.

## Complete blood count (CBC)

The most common test, a CBC gives information on hydration status, anemia, infection, the blood's clotting ability, and the immune system's ability to respond.

- > HCT (hematocrit) measures the percentage of red blood cells to detect anemia and dehydration.
- > Hb and MCHC (hemoglobin and mean corpuscular hemoglobin concentration) measure hemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying pigment of red blood cells (corpuscles).
- > GRANS and L/M (granulocytes and lymphocytes/monocytes) are specific types of white blood cells

- > WBC (white blood cell) count classifies and measures the body's immune cells. Increases or decreases indicate certain diseases or infections.
- > EOS (eosinophils) are a specific type of white blood cells that, if elevated, may indicate allergic or parasitic conditions.
- > PLT (platelet count) measures cells that help stop bleeding by forming blood clots.
- > RETICS (reticulocytes) are immature red blood cells. High or low levels help classify anemias.

## Serum chemistry profile

These common tests evaluate organ function, electrolyte status, hormone levels, and more.

- > ALB (albumin) is a serum protein that helps evaluate hydration, hemorrhage, and intestinal, liver, and kidney health.
- > ALKP or ALP (alkaline phosphatase) elevations may indicate liver damage, Cushing's disease, and active bone growth in young pets.
- > ALT (alanine aminotransferase) is a sensitive indicator of active liver damage but doesn't indicate the cause.
- > AMYL (amylase) elevations show pancreatitis or kidney disease.
- > AST (aspartate aminotransferase) increases may indicate liver, heart, or skeletal muscle damage.
- > BUN (blood urea nitrogen) reflects kidney function. An increased blood level is called azotemia and can be caused by kidney, liver, and heart disease, urethral obstruction, shock, and dehydration.
- > Ca (calcium) deviations can indicate a variety of diseases. Tumors, hyperparathyroidism, kidney disease, and low albumin are just a few of the conditions that alter serum calcium.
- > CHOL (cholesterol) is used to supplement diagnosis of hypothyroidism, liver disease, Cushing's disease, and diabetes mellitus.
- > Cl (chloride) is an electrolyte often lost with vomiting and Addison's disease. Elevations often indicate dehydration.
- > Cortisol is a hormone that is measured in tests for Cushing's disease (the low-dose dexamethasone suppression test) and Addison's disease (ACTH stimulation test).
- > CREA (creatinine) reflects kidney function. This test helps distinguish between kidney and nonkidney causes of elevated BUN.
- > GGT (gamma-glutamyl transpeptidase) is an enzyme that, when elevated, indicates liver disease or corticosteroid excess.
- > GLOB (globulin) is a blood protein that often increases with chronic inflammation and certain disease states.
- > GLU (glucose) is blood sugar. Elevated levels may indicate diabetes mellitus or stress. Low levels can cause collapse, seizures, or coma.
- > K (potassium) is an electrolyte lost with vomiting, diarrhea, or excessive urination. Increased levels may indicate kidney failure, Addison's disease, dehydration, and urethral obstruction. High levels can lead to cardiac arrest and death.
- > LIP (lipase) is an enzyme that may indicate pancreatitis when elevated.
- > Na (sodium) is an electrolyte lost with vomiting, diarrhea, and kidney or Addison's diseases. This test also helps indicate hydration status.
- > PHOS (phosphorous) elevations are often associated with kidney disease, hyperthyroidism, and bleeding disorders.
- > TBIL (total bilirubin) elevations may indicate liver or hemolytic disease. This test helps identify bile duct problems and certain types of anemia.
- > TP (total protein) indicates hydration status and provides information about the liver, kidneys, and infectious diseases.
- > T4 (thyroxine) is a thyroid hormone. Decreased levels often signal hypothyroidism in dogs, while high levels indicate hyperthyroidism in cats.