



Cumbria Advisory Thyroid Service

INFORMATION SHEET



Blood Tests

Blood tests are taken to check whether an abnormally high or low T4 level is in fact due to the thyroid. There are two main choices: The TSH and the FT4 test.

TSH test: The first blood test taken is usually the TSH - thyroid stimulating hormone - level test. This test is not always 100% accurate but it can still give an early indication of the need either for hormone replacement or the need to refer the patient to an endocrinologist for further tests and treatment. There are other tests that can be done to ascertain more accurately the type and extent of thyroid dysfunction.

Free T4 test: Testing the Free T4 is becoming increasingly popular as a measurement of true thyroid activity and testing the Free T3 levels gives a more accurate picture of the thyroid's output. Other tests can be taken for autoimmune deficiencies, cholesterol levels (often high in hypothyroidism.)

Other tests are...

Antibody testing: for the patient these are simple tests - an ordinary blood test. For the laboratory however they are complex. Antibodies in the blood indicate susceptibility to autoimmune disease.

Radioiodine uptake test: is available to indicate how effectively or hungrily the thyroid cells are latching on to the iodine in circulation, which is a necessary ingredient of thyroid hormones. The results of these tests are useful in diagnosis and also in assessing the necessary dosage if it is decided by the specialist that radioiodine treatment is required.

TBG test: thyroid-binding globulin - one of the carrier proteins that act as transporters for 99.9% of the thyroid circulation. This test is seldom used since thyroid function can be adequately assessed without it.

Blood tests covered in this sheet are the most popular and the main ones used. Should the need arise however there are other tests that can be done. Also bear in mind laboratory results may vary from one area to another. The ranges for South Cumbria are covered in our Hypothyroidism sheet No.1

C.A.T.S RECOMMENDS YOU ALWAYS SEEK YOUR DOCTORS ADVICE

Disclaimer

The purpose of this information leaflet is to help those suffering with thyroid disease. Whilst every effort is made to provide accurate information, it is impossible to ensure that the information given is relevant to every individual. No responsibility is accepted by CATS and it is recommended and essential, that if in any doubt about your condition, that you should always contact your doctor, specialist physician or surgeon to seek medical advice.