

TEST PREPARATION IS NOT JUST FOR STUDENTS

KNOW HOW TO PREPARE FOR MEDICAL TESTS



The accuracy of many medical tests can depend on a variety of factors including:

- time of day
- your posture
- whether you have been sick
- current medications
- recent workouts/exercise routines.

Inaccurate results can lead to additional procedures, drugs you may not need, or unnecessary medical bills. When a test fails to detect a health problem, it can deprive you of needed care.

Before having **any** diagnostic test, research the preparation needs on web sites like Lab Tests online, call the laboratory for specific instructions and clarify with your healthcare provider any instructions you receive. What follows are two examples of test preparation for accurate results:

Cholesterol Test: The results of your cholesterol test can vary by as much a 10% depending on what you ate/drank, medications you take and other health problems. Here's how to do the test right:

- The LDL (bad) cholesterol and triglycerides are affected by what you eat and drink. So to get accurate results, fast for 12 hours before the test. That means no food or drink, except water.
- If your cholesterol results are unusually high or low, the test should be repeated in a few weeks. Stress can raise cholesterol and cancer could lower it.
- Avoid intense workouts 12-24 hours before the test because it can falsely elevate your HDL.
- Make sure your doctor knows all of your medications. There are a number of medications that can raise your cholesterol levels.

Blood Pressure Measurement: Here are steps that need to be taken whether you are taking your blood pressure at home, in the doctor's office or at church.

- Make sure your doctor knows all the medications you are taking. Many over-the-counter and prescription drugs can raise your blood pressure.
- Go to the bathroom first. A full bladder can raise blood pressure as much as 15 points systolic (top number) and 10 points diastolic (bottom number).
- Sit correctly. Your back should be straight and supported with you sitting on a chair (not the exam table), your feet flat on the floor with legs uncrossed, and your arm should be supported on a flat surface (like a table) with the upper arm at heart level.
- Measure twice. If your blood pressure reading is high, have it measured again at the end of your exam when you are usually more relaxed.
- Remain quiet. Talking can raise blood pressure by up to 10 points on either the top or bottom number.
- Check the cuff. Measurements taken over clothing or with too small a cuff can boost blood pressure by as much as 50 points.

This information was compiled from ConsumerReports.org/Health and the American Association for Clinical Chemistry website.



"I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well." 3 John 1:2