

## Lab tests to monitor HIV - Living with HIV, part 4

Some lab tests are needed when you are first diagnosed with HIV infection. Some of these tests are also used to monitor your HIV infection over the long term.

### CD4 count



A CD4 count measures the number of CD4 cells in the blood. CD4 cells are infection-fighting cells in the immune system. HIV destroys CD4 cells, and this damages the immune system.

ART, or antiretroviral therapy, is a set of medicines that prevents HIV from destroying CD4 cells. ART is recommended for everyone with HIV, no matter what their CD4 count is.

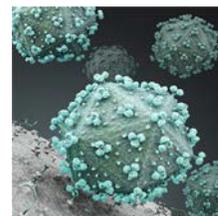
A CD4 count below 200 increases the urgency to start and stay on ART. The higher your CD4 cell count, the healthier your immune system.

### CD4 Percentage

This measures how many of the **white cells** in your blood are actually CD4 cells. It helps your doctor know how healthy your immune system is.

### Viral load

An HIV viral load test measures how much virus is in your blood. A goal of HIV treatment is to keep a person's viral load so low that the virus can't be detected by a viral load test.



### Drug-resistance testing

This testing identifies any HIV medicines that will not be effective against your particular strain of HIV.

### Complete Blood Count - CBC

This measures red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets in a sample of your blood. It can reveal infections and other medical issues.

### Serum Chemistry Panel



This test gives information about how your kidneys and liver are working. It helps your doctor measure the impact of your medications on your body's ability to function normally.

### Sexually Transmitted Disease or STD Screening

Infection with another STD can cause HIV infection to get worse more quickly because it damages your immune system. It also increases the risk of spreading HIV to a sexual partner.

## **PAP Smear - Cervical and Anal**

This is a test to detect abnormal cells from the **cervix** and **anus**. These cells could become cancerous if they are not treated.

## **Hepatitis A, B, and C tests**

These blood tests check for infection with **Hepatitis A, B, or C**. They help your doctor know if you should have treatment or get one of the hepatitis vaccines.



## **Tuberculosis or TB Test**

A positive TB test does not mean you have active TB. It means you will need further evaluation. Untreated TB can be a deadly disease for people living with HIV.

## **Toxoplasmosis Screening**

This test checks for a parasite that can cause severe damage to the brain, eyes, and other organs in people with weakened immune systems.

**Lipid Panel - Cholesterol and Triglycerides:** Some HIV medicines can affect your cholesterol levels. This can make you prone to other medical problems, including heart disease.



Be sure to get answers to any questions you have about HIV/AIDS. Your public health department, health care provider, and public library can help.