



## Antibody titer blood test



### Definition

Antibody titer is a laboratory test that measures the level of antibodies in a blood sample.

### Alternative Names

Titer - antibodies; Serum antibodies

### How the Test is Performed

A blood sample is needed.

### How to Prepare for the Test

No special preparation is necessary for this test.

### How the Test will Feel

When the needle is inserted to draw blood, some people feel moderate pain. Others feel only a prick or stinging. Afterward, there may be some throbbing or slight bruising. This soon goes away.

### Why the Test is Performed

The antibody level (titer) in the blood tells your health care provider whether or not you have been exposed to an antigen, or something that the body thinks is foreign. The body uses antibodies to attack and remove foreign substances.

In some situations, your provider may check your antibody titer to see if you had an infection in the past (for example, chickenpox) or to decide which vaccines you need.

The antibody titer is also used to determine:

- The strength of an immune response to the body's own tissue in diseases such as systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) and other autoimmune disorders
- If you need a booster vaccine
- Whether a vaccine you had before helped your immune system protect you against the specific disease
- If you have had a recent or past infection, such as mononucleosis or viral hepatitis

If the test is being done to see if a vaccine fully protects you against a disease, the normal result depends on the specific value for that immunization.

Negative antibody tests can help rule out certain infections.

Normal value ranges may vary slightly among different laboratories. Talk to your provider about the meaning of your specific test results.

## What Abnormal Results Mean

Abnormal results depend on which antibodies are being measured.

Abnormal results may be due to:

- Autoimmune disease
- Failure of a vaccine to fully protect you against a certain disease
- Immune deficiency
- Viral infections

## Risks

There is little risk involved with having your blood taken. Veins vary in size from one person to another and from one side of the body to the other. Obtaining a blood sample from some people may be more difficult than from others.

Risks associated with having blood drawn are slight, but may include:

- Excessive bleeding
- Fainting or feeling lightheaded
- Multiple punctures to locate veins
- Hematoma (blood accumulating under the skin)
- Infection (a slight risk any time the skin is broken)

## References

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