

Recommended annual blood tests for pouch patients

Blood tests explained

Below are the blood tests that St. Mark's patients usually have done as part of their annual checkup at the hospital.

If you no longer have follow ups at St. Mark's or are not a patient there, then you can request that your G.P. does these as part of your Annual Long Term Condition review.

These tests may be carried out during your routine physical examination or may be used as part of a more comprehensive set of tests.

Full blood count (FBC)

This is a test to check the types and numbers of cells in your blood, including red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets.

This can help give an indication of your general health, as well as provide important clues about certain health problems you may have.

For example, an FBC may detect signs of:

iron deficiency anaemia or B12 deficiency anaemia

infection or inflammation

bleeding or clotting disorders

Erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR)

This test works by measuring how long it takes for red blood cells to fall to the bottom of a test tube. The quicker they fall, the more likely it is there are high levels of inflammation.

Recommended annual blood tests for pouch patients

An ESR is often used to help diagnose conditions associated with inflammation, such as:

arthritis

endocarditis

Crohn's disease

giant cell arteritis

polymyalgia rheumatica

Along with other tests, an ESR can also be useful in confirming whether you have an infection.

Vitamin D and Folate

Vitamin D is absorbed in the jejunum and B12 at the end of the ileum. With pouch surgery, the absorption rates in these parts of the bowel may be affected.

Folate (B12) deficiency can occur in restricted diets

Ferritin

Ferritin is a blood protein that contains iron.

If a ferritin test reveals that your blood ferritin level is lower than normal, it indicates your body's iron stores are low and you have iron deficiency. As a result, you could be anemic.

Urea and electrolytes are the most commonly requested biochemistry tests.

Recommended annual blood tests for pouch patients

Electrolytes are salts and minerals, such as sodium, potassium, chloride and bicarbonate, which are found in the blood. They can conduct electrical impulses in the body.

They provide essential information on renal function, principally in excretion and homeostasis. Homeostasis refers to the body's ability to maintain a stable internal environment (regulating hormones, body temp., water balance, etc.)

Changes in the level of electrolytes can have various possible causes including dehydration, diabetes or certain medications.

Your electrolyte level may be checked if you're prescribed certain medications, such as diuretics or angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors, which are often used to treat high blood pressure.

Treatment for an electrolyte imbalance will depend on which electrolyte is out of balance and by how much.

Creatinine

Creatinine levels are a major factor in determining the estimated glomerular filtration rate, which is the gold standard marker of kidney health. Glomerular filtration is the first step in making urine. It is the process that your kidneys use to filter excess fluid and waste products out of the blood into the urine collecting tubules of the kidney, so they may be eliminated from your body.

The tests' clinical value is in the diagnosis and management of acute kidney injury and chronic kidney disease, which, if left untreated, can lead to thrombosis and cardiovascular disease such as myocardial infarction and stroke.

Calcium levels may be depleted due to long term steroid use

Liver function test

Recommended annual blood tests for pouch patients

When the liver is damaged, it releases substances called enzymes into the blood and levels of proteins produced by the liver begin to drop.

By measuring the levels of these enzymes and proteins, it's possible to build up a picture of how well the liver is functioning.

This can help to diagnose certain liver conditions, including hepatitis, cirrhosis (liver scarring), and alcohol related liver disease.

1;25 patients with Ulcerative Colitis develop Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis which causes inflammation of the liver and bile ducts

Currently, there is a shortage of blood tests tubes so G.P.s are limiting blood tests. Urgent blood tests are still being carried out.

If your G.P. decides to exclude some blood tests as non-standard, then it will be worth mentioning that you have issues with dehydration and, for many of us, a restricted diet.

Further information is available on www.nhs.uk or www.LabTestsOnline.uk. Both provide comprehensive and up to date information about blood tests.

Disclaimer:

Always seek the advice of your consultant, GP, or other qualified health professional when considering any new treatment or surgery. Please contact your local stoma/pouch nurse with any specific medical questions, in the first instance. Medical information changes rapidly. Every effort is made to ensure that all information on this website is as accurate and comprehensive as possible – but neither the Red Lion Group nor its members can be held responsible for any errors or omissions.

The Red Lion Group is a charity, run by volunteers, with advice from St. Mark's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (Pouch Department). The content of the website is intended to be helpful to people with internal ileo-anal pouch and those who are considering such surgery. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice or a medical examination. We do not promote or recommend any treatment or course of action.



pouchsupport.org