

HOW DO I READ A LAB REPORT?



Your lab report has a structure. Once you know it, you can decode it.

1 PATIENT INFORMATION					
Name: Jane Doe DOB: 03/14/1975 Sex: F		Sample information Specimen Number: #12345 Collected: 09/16/2026		Ordering Provider: Doe, John MD	
4 LAB REPORT					
Test	5 Result	Units	7 Reference Range	Flag	9 Previous Results
Complete Blood Count (CBC)	---	---	---	---	---
-Hemoglobin	12.8	g/dL	11.5-15.5	---	12.6 (09/16/2024)
10 ABCLABS 123 Main St, Houston, TX 77002 (123) 456-7891			REPORT DATE AND TIME 09/18/2026 19:20		

- 1. Patient information:** Identifies the patient by name, date of birth, and sex.
- 2. Sample information:** Shows the specimen number and collection date.
- 3. Ordering provider:** Identifies the healthcare professional who requested the test.
- 4. Test name:** Names the laboratory test performed.
- 5. Result:** Shows the value obtained from the test.
- 6. Units:** Indicates how the result is measured, such as g/dL.
- 7. Reference range:** Shows the range used to interpret the result; ranges vary between labs.
- 8. Flag:** Marks results outside the reference range, often as H (high) or L (low).
- 9. Previous results:** Shows earlier test results for comparison, if available.
- 10. Laboratory information:** Identifies the lab and provides its contact details.
- 11. Report date and time:** Shows when the report was generated, which may differ from the collection date.



The reference range is where results usually fall for most healthy people. It is not a diagnosis.

Ranges differ between labs and hospitals.



A flag means that your results are outside of the range.

Again, it does not automatically mean that something is wrong.



One result is an immediate overview.

Your doctor looks at past trends and your whole history.



Units matter.

The same test can be reported in different units. Make sure you know what you're looking at.

DISCLAIMER: Lab reports vary by laboratory, so the layout, labels, units, and reference ranges may differ. Always refer to the specific instructions and information provided on your report.



This guide simply explains the structure and components of a report. It does not specify or indicate what any specific value means for anyone's health. Ask your doctor or nurse what your results mean for you.