

Endomysial Antibody



Does this test have other names?

EMA test

What is this test?

This test looks for certain antibodies in your blood that may mean you have celiac disease, an autoimmune disease.

If you have celiac disease, your immune system responds abnormally to a protein called gluten. Gluten is found in wheat, barley, and rye products. Your body makes antibodies to the gluten called endomysial antibodies (EMA). These autoantibodies cause your intestine to swell. They can also keep your body from fully absorbing nutrients from food. Long-term (chronic) swelling and increasing damage to the small intestine leads to malnutrition, among other problems.

Why do I need this test?

You may need this test if your healthcare provider believes that you have celiac disease. Symptoms of celiac disease include:

- Repeated belly pain and bloating
- Chronic diarrhea
- Constipation
- Pale, foul-smelling, or fatty stool
- Excessive intestinal gas
- Weight loss
- Mouth sores (ulcers)
- Extreme tiredness (fatigue)
- Anemia
- Mood disorders, including depression
- Seizures
- Itchy skin rash
- Bone and joint pain

In children, symptoms may also include:

- Light-colored, fatty stools
- Vomiting
- Irritability or changes in mood
- Slow growth

- Weight loss
- Problems with dental enamel in adult (permanent) teeth

What other tests might I have along with this test?

You may also need other blood tests to look for:

- Anti-tissue transglutaminase, or tTG, antibodies
- Anti-deaminated gliadin peptides
- Blood cell counts
- Cholesterol levels
- Thyroid function

Your healthcare provider may also test you for an immunoglobulin A (IgA) deficiency. If you have this deficiency, it will make it harder to get a clear result on your endomysial antibody test. Instead, the lab will use a different class of tests.

Your healthcare provider may also order genetic testing. Genetic testing can't diagnose celiac disease, but it can find that you don't have it.

If any of the tests show that you may have celiac disease, you will most likely need a biopsy of your intestine. This is done to get a more complete picture of your condition.

In children younger than 2 years, the healthcare provider may also order a test to look for anti-gliadin antibodies.

What do my test results mean?

Test results may vary depending on your age, gender, health history, and other things. Your test results may be different depending on the lab used. They may not mean you have a problem. Ask your healthcare provider what your test results mean for you.

Normal results are negative, meaning that no EMA antibodies were found in your blood.

If your levels of IgA EMA and tTG antibodies are higher, it may mean that you have celiac disease. If you also have typical symptoms and respond to a gluten-free diet, you will likely be diagnosed with celiac disease.

How is this test done?

The test is done with a blood sample. A needle is used to draw blood from a vein in your arm or hand.

Does this test pose any risks?

Having a blood test with a needle carries some risks. These include bleeding, infection, bruising, and feeling lightheaded. When the needle pricks your arm or hand, you may feel a slight sting or pain. Afterward, the site may be sore.

What might affect my test results?

Not eating gluten will affect your results.

How do I get ready for this test?

You must be on a diet that contains gluten for at least 4 weeks before this test. Talk with your healthcare provider about specific diet instructions. Be sure your healthcare provider knows about all medicines, herbs,

vitamins, and supplements you are taking. This includes medicines that don't need a prescription and any illegal drugs you may use.

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