

Immunofixation (Blood)



Does this test have other names?

IFE, immunofixation electrophoresis

What is this test?

This blood test finds out if your body is making or losing protein in abnormal amounts. It can also tell if you are having problems absorbing protein from foods.

This test helps diagnose or check on conditions linked to health problems like the blood cancer multiple myeloma.

For this test, your blood sample goes through a complex process called electrophoresis. This process singles out the different proteins in your blood. A healthcare provider then uses a dye to bind to the proteins and stain them.

Immunofixation "fixes" certain proteins into place with antibodies and then washes away the others before staining them. On a computer screen, these proteins form a pattern of bands. Peaks and valleys in the bands may mean that you may be making too many or too few of certain proteins. The band pattern is specific for certain diseases.

Why do I need this test?

You may need this test if you have symptoms of multiple myeloma, multiple sclerosis, or other problems that affect how the proteins in your blood work.

You may also have the test if you have serious nutritional problems, such as problems absorbing protein from the food that you eat.

What other tests might I have along with this test?

You may need other tests if your healthcare provider thinks that you have multiple myeloma. These tests include a bone marrow biopsy.

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.

If your results show that you have monoclonal proteins, called M-proteins, it may mean that you have multiple myeloma. You will need other tests to confirm your diagnosis.

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?

Other factors aren't likely to affect your results.

How do I get ready for this test?

You don't need to prepare for this test. 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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