

Retic Count



Does this test have other names?

Reticulocyte count, retic

What is this test?

This test measures the number of reticulocytes in your blood.

Reticulocytes are immature red blood cells that are still developing. The test finds out whether your bone marrow is making red blood cells the way it should.

Red blood cells flow throughout your bloodstream. They bring in oxygen and take away carbon dioxide.

If your body doesn't make enough red blood cells, you may have a condition called anemia. Anemia can be caused by low iron levels (iron-deficiency anemia), or by having a kidney or blood disease (thalassemia) that affects your body's ability to make red blood cells.

This test can be used to diagnose anemia and find out why you have a disease. The test can also help determine how serious the disease is. The test is also used to evaluate how your bone marrow is functioning.

Why do I need this test?

You may need this test if your healthcare provider suspects that you have anemia. The symptoms of anemia may include:

- Feeling weak and quite tired
- Headaches, feeling short of breath, or chest pain
- Cracks in your mouth
- Swelling of your tongue
- Enlarged spleen
- Feeling cold or numb in your hands or feet
- Getting sick often
- Craving nonfood substances, such as dirt or starch, which is a condition called pica

What other tests might I have along with this test?

Your healthcare provider may also order other tests, including:

- Complete blood count, or CBC, to measure other substances in the blood, including hematocrit, white blood cells, platelets, and hemoglobin
- Blood tests to measure the levels of iron in your blood
- Tests to measure the levels of hormones, including thyroid hormones, in your blood
- Fecal occult blood test to check for internal bleeding

Children may have tests to measure the levels of lead in their blood.

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.

Results are given as a percentage. The normal level of reticulocytes in the blood is between 0.5% and 1.5% of total red blood cells (erythrocytes). Lower or higher levels may mean that you have a type of anemia.

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?

Tell your healthcare provider 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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