

EBV Antibody



Does this test have other names?

Specific Epstein-Barr virus antibodies, EBV-specific antibodies

What is this test?

This is a blood test that checks for antibodies to the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV). Most people are infected by this virus at some point. EBV often doesn't have any symptoms, but it can cause mononucleosis (mono) or other conditions in some people, especially teens and young adults.

Why do I need this test?

You may need this test if you have symptoms that might be caused by mono, such as sore throat, fatigue, fever, rash, swollen glands in the neck, or an enlarged spleen. Your healthcare provider will use the test to see if EBV is causing your illness. But you may not have this test unless your results for other mono tests are negative.

What other tests might I have along with this test?

If your healthcare provider suspects that you may have mono, you will likely have other blood tests, such as a heterophile antibody test or a mono test, also called a mono spot test. This test looks for different antibodies in the blood, but does not confirm the presence of EBV. You may also have a blood test to check your blood cell counts. People with mono often have higher than normal levels of white blood cells called lymphocytes. Blood tests to check for other infections may also be done. If you have a sore throat, you may also get a throat swab to check for strep throat.

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 the results for your EBV antibodies test are negative, it likely means you have never been infected with EBV. If your test is positive, it could mean a few different things. Some types of EBV antibodies are present in higher numbers during an active infection. Other EBV antibodies mean that you had an infection in the past. Depending on the type of antibodies your test shows, your healthcare provider can find out more about what is causing your illness.

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?

A past EBV infection can affect your test 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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