

Pancreatic Polypeptide



Does this test have other names?

Plasma pancreatic polypeptide, PP, human pancreatic polypeptide

What is this test?

This test measures a substance in your blood called pancreatic polypeptide. Pancreatic polypeptide is secreted by special cells in your pancreas.

People who have neuroendocrine tumors (NETs) have higher levels of this substance. These tumors can be functional or nonfunctional. Nonfunctional tumors are more common. They are called nonfunctional because they secrete substances that do not cause symptoms. That means they may not cause any symptoms until they have grown large.

Why do I need this test?

You may need this test if your healthcare provider suspects that you have a pancreatic NET. When these tumors cause symptoms, they can seem similar to many other common digestive problems. Symptoms of nonfunctional pancreatic NETs include:

- Belly pain
- Weight loss
- Yellowish color of the skin (jaundice)

If you have already been diagnosed with a pancreatic NET, you may need this test to help your healthcare provider decide on the best treatment for you.

What other tests might I have along with this test?

Your healthcare provider may also order other tests to look for other substances in your blood that rise if you have a pancreatic NET. These substances are called biochemical tumor markers.

Your provider may also order an imaging test that takes a picture of your pancreas. They may also suggest you have a biopsy. This involves taking out a small piece of the tumor and looking at it under a microscope.

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.

Pancreatic polypeptide is measured in picograms per milliliter (pg/mL).

A high blood level may mean you have:

- A pancreatic neuroendocrine tumor
- Another type of endocrine pancreatic tumor
- Diabetes

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?

Eating before the test will cause pancreatic polypeptide levels to rise.

How do I get ready for this test?

You will likely need to not eat or drink anything except water for a period of time before this test. Talk with your healthcare provider about this. 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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