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Electrolytes

Electrolytes are minerals in your blood and other body fluids that carry an electric charge.

Electrolytes affect how your body functions in many ways, including:

- The amount of water in your body
- The acidity of your blood (pH)
- Your nerve and muscle function
- Other important processes

You lose electrolytes when you sweat. You must replace them by drinking fluids that contain electrolytes. Water does not contain electrolytes.

Common electrolytes include:

- Calcium
- Chloride
- Magnesium
- Phosphorus
- Potassium
- Sodium

Electrolytes can be acids, bases, or salts. They can be measured by different blood tests. Each electrolyte can be measured separately, such as:

- Ionized calcium
- Serum calcium
- Serum chloride
- Serum magnesium
- Serum phosphorus
- Serum potassium
- Serum sodium

Note: Serum is the part of blood that doesn't contain cells.

Sodium, potassium, chloride, and calcium levels can also be measured as part of a basic metabolic panel. A more complete test, called comprehensive metabolic panel, can test for these and several more chemicals.

The electrolytes - urine test measures electrolytes in urine. It tests the levels of calcium, chloride, potassium, sodium, and other electrolytes.

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