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Digoxin test

A digoxin test checks how much digoxin you have in your blood. Digoxin is a type of medicine called a cardiac glycoside. It is used to treat certain heart problems, although much less often than in the past.

How the Test is Performed

A blood sample is needed.

How to Prepare for the Test

Ask your health care provider whether you should take your usual medicines before the test.

How the Test will Feel

When the needle is inserted to draw blood, some people feel moderate pain. Others feel only a prick or stinging. Afterward, there may be some throbbing where the needle was inserted.

Why the Test is Performed

The main purpose of this test is to determine the best dosage of digoxin and prevent side effects.

It is important to monitor the level of digitalis medicines such as digoxin. That is because the difference between a safe treatment level and a harmful level is small.

Normal Results

In general, normal values range from 0.5 to 1.9 nanograms per milliliter of blood. But the right level for some people may vary depending on the situation.

The examples above are common measurements for results of these tests. Normal value ranges may vary slightly among different laboratories. Some labs use different measurements or test different samples. Talk to your provider about the meaning of your specific test results.

What Abnormal Results Mean

Abnormal results may mean you are getting too little or too much digoxin.

A very high value could mean that you have or are likely to develop a digoxin overdose (toxicity).

Risks

Risks associated with having blood drawn are slight but may include:

- Excessive bleeding
- Fainting or feeling lightheaded
- Hematoma (blood accumulating under the skin)
- Infection (a slight risk any time the skin is broken)

Alternative Names

Heart failure - digoxin test

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