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Donath-Landsteiner test

The Donath-Landsteiner test is a blood test to detect harmful antibodies related to a rare disorder called paroxysmal cold hemoglobinuria. These antibodies form and destroy red blood cells when the body is exposed to cold temperatures.

How the Test is Performed

A blood sample is needed.

How to Prepare for the Test

No special preparation is needed.

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 or a slight bruise. This soon goes away.

Why the Test is Performed

This test is done to confirm a diagnosis of paroxysmal cold hemoglobinuria.

Normal Results

The test is considered normal if no Donath-Landsteiner antibodies are present. This is called a negative result.

Normal value ranges may vary slightly among different laboratories. Some labs use different measurements or test different samples. Talk to your health care provider about the meaning of your specific test results.

What Abnormal Results Mean

Abnormal results mean Donath-Landsteiner antibodies are present. This is a sign of paroxysmal cold hemoglobinuria.

Risks

There is little risk involved with having your blood taken. Veins and arteries vary in size from one person to another and from one side of the body to the other. Taking blood from some people may be more difficult than from others.

Other risks associated with having blood drawn are slight, but may include:

- Excessive bleeding
- Fainting or feeling lightheaded
- Multiple punctures to locate veins
- Hematoma (blood buildup under the skin)
- Infection (a slight risk any time the skin is broken)

Alternative Names

Anti-P antibody; Paroxysmal cold hemoglobinuria - Donath-Landsteiner

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