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HCG blood test - qualitative

A qualitative human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG or hCG) blood test checks if there is a hormone called human chorionic gonadotropin in your blood. HCG is a hormone produced in the body during pregnancy.

Other HCG tests include:

- HCG urine test
- Quantitative pregnancy test (checks specific level of HCG in your blood)

How the Test is Performed

A blood sample is needed. This is most often taken from a vein. The procedure is called a venipuncture.

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.

Why the Test is Performed

Most often, this test is performed to determine if you are pregnant. HCG level in the blood may also be high in women with certain types of ovarian tumors or in men with testicular tumors.

Normal Results

The test result will be reported as negative or positive.

- The test is negative if you are not pregnant.
- The test is positive if you are pregnant.

What Abnormal Results Mean

If your blood HCG is positive and you do not have a pregnancy properly implanted in the uterus, it may indicate:

- Ectopic pregnancy

- Miscarriage
- Testicular cancer (in men)
- Trophoblastic tumor
- Hydatidiform mole
- Ovarian cancer

Risks

Risks of having blood drawn are slight, but may include:

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

Considerations

False positive tests may occur when certain hormones are increased, such as after menopause or when taking hormone supplements.

A pregnancy test is considered to be very accurate. When the test is negative but pregnancy is still suspected, the test should be repeated in 1 week.

Alternative Names

Beta-HCG in blood serum - qualitative; Human chorionic gonadotrophin - serum - qualitative; Pregnancy test - blood - qualitative; Serum HCG - qualitative; HCG in blood serum - qualitative

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Updated by: John D. Jacobson, MD, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Loma Linda University School of Medicine, Loma Linda, CA. Also reviewed by David C. Dugdale, MD, Medical Director, Brenda Conaway, Editorial Director, and the A.D.A.M. Editorial team.

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