

VITAMIN B12 + FOLATE

LAB RESULT EXPLANATION

These screenings are intended to provide information to be used by health care professionals to detect potential problems and help make you more aware of your health. If, after reading this pamphlet, you still have questions concerning your results, please call your personal health care professional.

YOUR BLOOD TESTS

You and your doctor can learn a great deal about your health from a sample of your blood. Sometimes test results will be abnormal before you have any symptoms. If symptoms have developed, laboratory tests help confirm that a problem does exist. A normal test result is just as significant as an abnormal result. When a result is normal, it not only helps you rule out disease, but it also establishes a baseline for you. Each person has their own baseline "normal". A person's own results are the best baseline for monitoring any change that takes place in the future. If any of your values are significantly different than previous results, contact your health care professional.



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MEDICATIONS AND FASTING

Fasting is **not required** for accurate test results. Speak with your physician if you have concerns about medication interference with result values.

VITAMIN B12 is essential in red blood cell formation, cell metabolism, nerve function, and production of DNA (the molecules inside your cells that carry genetic information). Food sources of Vitamin B12 include poultry, meat, fish, and dairy products. Vitamin B12 is also added to some foods such as fortified breakfast cereals, and is also available as an oral supplement. Vitamin B12 is not found in plant foods, therefore people who follow a strict vegetarian or vegan diet may be prone to Vitamin B12 deficiency.

VITAMIN B12 DEFICIENCY can lead to anemia, fatigue, muscle weakness, intestinal problems, nerve damage, and mood disturbances. Low Vitamin B12 levels are associated with dementia and low cognitive function, although more research is needed to determine if Vitamin B12 supplements might help prevent or treat dementia. Older adults and people with digestive tract conditions that affect absorption of nutrients are susceptible to Vitamin B12 deficiency. Consult your physician before beginning any new supplements based on laboratory results.

FOLATE is also known as Vitamin B9, and is important in red blood cell formation and cell growth and function. This nutrient is critical during early pregnancy to reduce risks of birth defects of the brain and spine, also known as neural tube defects. Folate is found mainly in dark green leafy vegetables, beans, peas, and nuts. Fruits high in folate include oranges, lemons, bananas, melons, and strawberries. The synthetic (man-made) form of folate is folic acid, which is an essential component of prenatal vitamins and is in many fortified foods such as cereal and pastas. Research has shown that folic acid works with Vitamin B6 and B12 to control high levels of homocysteine in the blood. High levels of homocysteine may increase your risk of cardiovascular disease, so proper vitamin levels are important. Additionally, research suggests that folate may reduce the risk of various cancers, and may be helpful in treating depression.

FOLATE DEFICIENCY can occur in people who have conditions that prevent the small intestine from absorbing nutrients from foods. It's important to prevent folate deficiency before becoming pregnant, to prevent birth defects. Consult with your physician if you are planning pregnancy to determine if additional folic acid supplements are right for you.

YOUR SCREENING RESULTS

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO DIAGNOSE OR TREAT ANY DISEASE OR HEALTH PROBLEMS WITH THIS BLOOD SCREEN ALONE.

It can help you learn more about your body and detect potential problems in early stages when treatment or changes in personal health habits can be most effective.

Screening results that fall outside of Sheridan Memorial Hospital's reference range (range of expected screening values) are separated out from the rest of the results to highlight them. They are printed with an **H (high)** or **L (low)** on the report. The reference range for each test is listed on the right side of your blood report, or by clicking the result value in your Patient Portal.