

What do my lab results mean?

HIV and Laboratory Tests

You want your
CD4 count to be
HIGH

CD4 Cell Count

CD4 cells are specialized cells of the immune system destroyed by HIV. A CD4 cell count measures how many CD4 cells are in your blood. The higher your CD4 cell count, the healthier your immune system.



HIV Viral Load Test

An HIV viral load test, also called an HIV RNA test, tracks how many HIV particles are in a sample of your blood. This is called your viral load.

You want your
viral load to be
LOW

Taking a combination of HIV medicines every day prevents HIV from destroying CD4 cells and helps lower your viral load.

What are some other important tests?

DRUG RESISTANCE TEST

HIV can change form, making it resistant to some HIV medicines. A drug resistance test helps your health care provider choose the HIV medicines that will work for you.

TESTS FOR OTHER INFECTIONS

HIV weakens the immune system, leaving people vulnerable to other infections. Health care providers test for tuberculosis, hepatitis B and C infections, and other potential illnesses. The treatment for another infection may affect HIV treatment.

COMPLETE BLOOD COUNT

This test measures how many red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets are in your blood. This helps health care providers keep track of your overall health and spot infections or other potential medical problems.

BLOOD CHEMISTRY TESTS

This group of tests measures several different chemicals in your blood to help monitor the health of your organs, especially your heart, liver, and kidneys. Health care providers use blood chemistry tests to look for side effects caused by HIV medicines.