

# Ferritin

Ferritin is a protein that contains iron and is the primary form of iron stored inside of cells. The small amount of ferritin that is released and circulates in the blood is a reflection of the total amount of iron stored in the body.

## What is being tested in a ferritin test?

This test measures the amount of ferritin in the blood to assess a person's iron stores in the body. The test is often ordered along with an iron level and total iron-binding capacity (TIBC, calculated based on blood level of transferrin) to detect a low iron level (iron deficiency) or too much iron in the body (iron overload) as well as to assess the severity of these conditions.

## What are common symptoms for needing a ferritin test?

A ferritin test as well as other iron-related tests may be ordered when a person develops signs and symptoms of iron-deficiency anemia such as:

- Chronic fatigue
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Pale appearance

A ferritin level may also be ordered when iron overload is suspected. Signs and symptoms of iron overload will vary from person to person and tend to worsen over time. They are due to iron accumulation in the blood and tissues. They may include:

- Joint pain
- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Weight loss
- Lack of energy
- Abdominal pain
- Loss of sex drive
- Organ damage

## What should I do with my results?

It is always recommended you meet with a healthcare provider to determine what your laboratory test results mean to you. Your healthcare provider will review all of your test results and, combined with your health history, will be able to provide an accurate picture of your health status.

**If your results were abnormal or out-of-range:** While ferritin levels are often evaluated in conjunction with other iron tests, such as iron and TIBC, low ferritin could signal an iron deficiency. If your ferritin levels are high, you have an iron overload that could signal hemochromatosis/hemosiderosis, hemolytic anemia, or sideroblastic anemia.

**If your results were within normal range:** If all of your results are within the normal range, you should consult with your healthcare provider about the need and frequency of further ferritin and other iron testing. Your healthcare provider is best suited to advise you on a timetable for all screening tests.

## What other resources are available to learn more about my health and laboratory tests?

- Lab Tests Online: [labtestsonline.org](http://labtestsonline.org)
- WebMD: [webmd.com](http://webmd.com)

*DLO Direct offers direct access to laboratory testing for informational purposes. A DLO Direct lab test result is not a medical diagnosis and is not intended as medical advice. Only a healthcare provider can interpret lab results and diagnose a medical condition or disease.*

*Because tests have not been ordered by a healthcare provider, third party entities, including Medicare and Medicaid, will not reimburse for these tests.*



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