

# Iron and TIBC

An iron and total iron-binding capacity (TIBC) test determines your blood iron level and shows if there is an abnormally high, abnormally low or a sufficient supply of iron. Iron is a vital oxygen-transporting mineral. Iron is absorbed from food and is necessary for the production of healthy red blood cells. Too little iron can cause anemia, while excess levels can cause medical problems as well.

## What the difference between iron deficiency and anemia?

Iron deficiency is a decrease in the amount of iron stored in the body, while anemia refers to a drop in the number of red blood cells and/or the amount of hemoglobin within the red blood cells. Insufficient levels of iron and iron storage will eventually lead to anemia.

## What are common symptoms of iron deficiency?

Common symptoms include:

- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Pale appearance

## What about high levels of iron?

Iron storage disease, also called hemochromatosis, occurs when the body absorbs too much iron from foods and vitamins. Usually caused by a genetic disorder, hemochromatosis can cause damage to the body's organs.

## What should I do if my results are abnormal or out of range?

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 any of your results were abnormal or out-of range:** Low levels of iron can be caused by many factors but may indicate anemia. Low iron levels can also occur during adolescence and pregnancy when the body has increased demands for iron. Low TIBC could be associated with malnutrition, kidney disease, or liver disease. High levels of iron can lead to damage to organs, such as the liver, heart and pancreas. As with any abnormal results, it's important that you discuss their implications with your healthcare provider.

**If your results were within normal range:** If your results fall within the normal range, discuss the necessity for periodic screening with your healthcare provider. 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?

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)
- 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.*

## FASTING REQUIRED

Fasting is required for an iron and TIBC test and early morning collection is preferred. Please DO NOT eat or drink anything except water for 8-12 hours before your test. DO NOT stop taking your prescription medications. If your healthcare provider advised you to take your medication with food, consult with your healthcare provider before fasting.



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