

Allergy Screen - Shellfish

The allergen-specific IgE antibody test is a blood test used to help diagnose an allergy to a specific substance or substances for a person who presents with acute or chronic allergy-like symptoms. This is especially true if symptoms are recurrent and appear to be tied to triggers, such as exposures to particular foods or environments, and if other family members are known to have allergies.

What is an IgE antibody?

IgE is an antibody that functions as part of the body's immune system. When someone with a predisposition to allergies is exposed to a potential allergen for the first time, that person becomes sensitized. The body perceives the potential allergen as a foreign substance and produces a specific IgE antibody. With the next exposure, these IgE antibodies recognize the allergen and cause the body to release histamines and other chemicals, resulting in an allergic reaction that begins at the exposure site.

What symptoms can occur with a food allergy?

There is a variety of symptoms with food allergies with a wide range of severity. Some common symptoms are:

- Hives
- Itchy mouth or ear canal
- Nausea or vomiting
- Eczema
- Diarrhea
- Stomach pain
- Trouble swallowing
- Turning blue
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Swelling of the lips, tongue or throat

What foods are being tested?

This food allergy test is looking for IgE antibodies to the following shellfish:

- Clam
- Crab
- Lobster
- Shrimp

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. Results of allergy blood testing must be interpreted with care. Even if an IgE test is negative, there is still a small chance that you have an allergy. Similarly, if the specific IgE test is positive, you may or may not ever have an actual physical allergic reaction when exposed to that substance.

If your results were positive: An elevated allergen-specific IgE result indicates that you likely have an allergy. However, the amount of specific IgE present does not necessarily predict the potential severity of a reaction. 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. Your healthcare provider may request additional medically-supervised allergy tests to confirm an allergy diagnosis.

If your results were negative: Negative results indicate you probably do not have a "true allergy," an IgE-mediated response to the specific allergens tested.

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

- Food Allergy Research & Education: foodallergy.org
- Lab Tests Online: labtestsonline.org
- WebMD: 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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