



Education

Liver Panel Test

What is the liver panel test?

The liver panel test involves several tests that check how well your liver is working. These tests are called liver function tests. They are blood tests.

Several different enzymes (proteins) made by the liver are measured in the blood:

- SGOT (serum glutamic oxaloacetic transaminase), also called AST (aspartate aminotransferase)
- SGPT (serum glutamic pyruvic transaminase), also called ALT (alanine aminotransferase)
- LDH (lactate dehydrogenase)
- ALP or AP (alkaline phosphatase, or "alk phos").

In addition to liver enzymes, bilirubin is also measured. Bilirubin is a chemical released into the blood when red blood cells break down. The liver uses bilirubin to make bile.

Why is this test done?

This test is done to see how well your liver is working and to check for liver disease.

How do I prepare for this test?

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight and the morning before your test. Tests that measure protein levels in the blood are not as accurate if you have eaten.
- You may need to avoid taking certain medicines before the test because they might affect the test result. Make sure your health care provider knows about any medicines, herbs, or supplements that you are taking. Don't stop any of your regular medicines without first consulting with your health care provider.
- Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions.

How is the test done?

A small amount of blood is taken from your arm with a needle. The blood is collected in tubes and sent to a lab.

Having this test will take just a few minutes of your time. There is no risk of getting AIDS, hepatitis, or any other blood-borne disease from this test.

How will I get the test results?

Ask your health care provider when and how you will get the result of your test.

What do the test results mean?

The results of your liver function tests may not be normal if:

- You are taking medicine that is causing liver problems.
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- You have an infection that is affecting your liver.
- You have a blockage in the liver or gallbladder. For example, gallstones might cause a blockage.

These tests for enzymes are most often done to look for liver problems, but the enzymes are produced in other parts of the body as well. For example, ALP is also made by the bones. This means that sometimes abnormal results of this test may be caused by conditions or diseases in parts of the body other than the liver. You may need to have more blood tests to find out which part of the body the extra enzyme is coming from.

Results that are lower than normal are usually not a cause for concern.

What if my test results are not normal?

Test results are only one part of a larger picture that takes into account your medical history and current health. Sometimes a test needs to be repeated to check the first result. Talk to your health care provider about your result and ask questions.

If your test results are not normal, ask your health care provider:

- if you need additional tests
- what you can do to work toward normal values
- when you need to be tested again.

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