hsCRP

Know your risk™ *for chronic inflammation.*

inflammation

What is hsCRP?

C-reactive protein (CRP) is produced by the liver when inflammation is present somewhere in your body. Traditionally, the CRP test has been used to identify risk for infection or chronic inflammatory conditions. Now, there is a newer test available called high-sensitivity CRP, or hsCRP, that measures smaller amounts of CRP in the blood.

Why should I get my hsCRP levels checked?

Most of the time, you can tell if you have inflammation. For example, if you cut your finger, you may see redness and swelling, and feel pain. This is called acute inflammation, or short-term inflammation. Other times, inflammation in your body may not be so obvious. This type of inflammation may be present for a long period of time without any symptoms. This is called chronic inflammation, or long-term inflammation.

Recently, it has been shown by researchers that chronic inflammation may occur within the arteries of the heart, where it may play a role in the development and progression of heart disease, acting as a "silent killer". Standard heart health tests, such as cholesterol tests, miss this chronic inflammation. The good news is that chronic inflammation can be monitored by measuring hsCRP levels in your blood.

The hsCRP test measures the amount of general inflammation within your body.

Researchers have shown that high hsCRP levels can indicate heart attack and stroke risk, even in apparently healthy individuals. High hsCRP levels are also a risk factor for people who do not have other risk factors that medical practitioners commonly look for such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure. For people who have had a heart attack, elevated hsCRP levels may indicate if they are at risk for another heart attack or an ischemic stroke.

When should my hsCRP levels be checked?

Your hsCRP level can be checked at the same time your medical provider runs other tests, such as a cholesterol test, to determine if you are at increased risk for a heart attack or stroke. You may be a good candidate for hsCRP testing if you are at moderate risk of vascular disease, or have several other risk factors such as high cholesterol or a family history of heart disease.

How should I prepare for the hsCRP test?

The hsCRP test does not require any special preparation. You do not need to be fasting, and can be taking medications. Make sure you don't have a cold, the flu or a dental infection when being checked as hsCRP levels will go up when you're sick. Instead, you should wait until you feel better before you are checked.

What can I do to help lower my hsCRP levels?

- Lifestyle changes, such as exercising more, eating more heart-healthy high fiber foods such as fruits/vegetables and whole grains or following a Mediterranean diet, can help to lower hsCRP levels.
- Quitting smoking helps reduce the amount of general inflammation in your body.
- Taking good care of your teeth can also help lower hsCRP and reduce your risk of heart disease.
- There are prescription and non-prescription medications that also can lower hsCRP.

It is important for you to work together with your medical provider to come up with a plan that is right for you.

RELATIVE RISK

hsCRP (mg/L)

<1.0 Low
1.0-3.0 Moderate
>3.0 High

ClevelandHeartLab®

Know your risk.

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