



PRIMARY BILIARY CHOLANGITIS (PBC)

Understanding your blood work

Canadian PBC Society

PBC FACT SHEET

(09/02/16)

Test	Description	Normal Range <small>(may vary by lab)</small>
ALP Alkaline Phosphatase	This enzyme occurs mainly in liver cells next to bile ducts, and in bone. The blood level is raised in PBC and is the main enzyme that is checked to see if you have a response to treatment.	45-129
TB/bili Total Bilirubin	This chemical gives bile its yellow/green colour. A high level of bilirubin in your blood will make you appear 'yellow' (jaundiced). Bilirubin is made from hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is a chemical in red blood cells that is released when your red blood cells break down. Liver cells take in bilirubin and attach sugar molecules to it - called 'conjugated' bilirubin which is passed into your bile ducts: Usually only high when PBC is very advanced	<22
ALT Alanine Transaminase	This enzyme helps to process proteins. An enzyme is a protein that helps to speed up chemical reactions in cells. ALT occur in liver cells. When your liver is injured or inflamed, the blood level of ALT usually rises.	<55
AST Aspartate Aminotransferase	This enzyme is usually found inside liver cells. When a blood test detects high levels of this enzyme in your blood it usually means your liver is injured in some way. However, AST can also be released if heart or skeletal muscles are damaged. For this reason, ALT is usually considered to be more specifically related to liver problems	10-44
Alb Albumin	This is the main protein made by the liver and it circulates in the bloodstream. The ability to make albumin (and other proteins) is affected in some types of liver disorders. A low level of blood albumin occurs in some liver disorders. It can also occur in people who are malnourished	35-55
Na - Sodium	A type of salt in the blood that may drop in cirrhosis or other diseases	135-147
K - Potassium	A type of salt in the blood that may go up with certain medications, like some types of water pills (diuretics).	3.5-5.5
Cr - Creatinine	A measure of how well your kidney is functioning. A higher number means your kidneys may not be working as well. The exact number is different for everyone as it changes based on how much muscle you have.	45-97
INR -International Normalized Ratio	This test measures one of the functions of the liver. It is a measure of how well your blood clots. May go up in cirrhosis or other diseases.	<1.1
Hb - Hemoglobin	The cells that carry oxygen in your blood. Usually normal in PBC but may drop in cirrhosis or other diseases.	120-160
WBC White Blood Cell	The cells that help your body fight infection. Usually normal in PBC but may drop in cirrhosis or other diseases	4-11
Plt - Platelets	Small cells which help the blood clot. Bleeding problems do not usually occur unless the platelets drop below 10, which does not usually happen in PBC.	150-400
GGT - Gamma-Glutamyltransferase	Can be high due to many causes and so is not considered a marker of activity of PBC on its own.	0-45