

CLL/SLL Lab Test Definitions

Plain-language definitions of tests commonly ordered in CLL/SLL care.

CBC

White blood cell (WBC) count

This counts all your white blood cells. White blood cells help your body fight germs and sickness. There are different kinds, like neutrophils, lymphocytes, monocytes, eosinophils, and basophils.

Also see: WBC differential

Red blood cell (RBC) count

This counts your red blood cells. Red blood cells carry oxygen from your lungs to the rest of your body, and carry carbon dioxide back to your lungs.

Hemoglobin (HGB)

This is a protein inside red blood cells. It grabs oxygen and carries it through your body. It also gives blood its red color.

Hematocrit (HCT)

This tells you what percentage of your blood is made up of red blood cells.

Mean corpuscular volume (MCV)

This measures the average size of your red blood cells.

Mean corpuscular hemoglobin (MCH)

This measures the average amount of hemoglobin inside one red blood cell.

Mean corpuscular hemoglobin concentration (MCHC)

This measures how much hemoglobin is packed into your red blood cells, on average.

Red cell distribution width (RDW)

This measures how much your red blood cells vary in size. A higher number means more variation in size.

Platelets (PLT)

Platelets are blood cells that help stop bleeding by forming clots. This test measures the number of platelets in your blood.

WBC Differential

The WBC differential shows how many of each type of WBC you have, either as a percentage or as an absolute count.

Neutrophils (percentage) (Neuts.%)

This is the percentage of your white blood cells that are neutrophils. Neutrophils are the most common white blood cell. They help fight bacteria and fungal infections.

Also see: ANC

Lymphocytes (percentage) (Lymphs.%)

This is the percentage of your white blood cells that are lymphocytes. Lymphocytes include B cells, T cells, and NK cells. They are an important part of your immune system. In most circumstances, the absolute number of lymphocytes (ALC) is the number to pay attention to.

Also see: ALC

Monocytes (percentage) (Monos.%)

This is the percentage of your white blood cells that are monocytes. Monocytes help clean up germs, dead cells, and other waste, and help guide your immune system.

Eosinophils (percentage) (Eos.%)

This is the percentage of your white blood cells that are eosinophils. Eosinophils help fight parasites and are involved in allergies and inflammation.

Basophils (percentage) (Baso.%)

This is the percentage of your white blood cells that are basophils. Basophils are the rarest white blood cell and play a role in allergic reactions and inflammation.

Absolute neutrophil count (ANC)

This is the number of neutrophils in your blood. Neutrophils help fight bacteria and fungal infections.

Also see: Neuts.%

Absolute lymphocyte count (ALC)

This is the number of lymphocytes in your blood. Lymphocytes include B cells, T cells, and NK cells. CLL/SLL is a cancer of the B cells.

Also see: Lymphs.%

Absolute monocyte count (Monos.#)

This is the number of monocytes in your blood.

Absolute eosinophil count (Eos.#)

This is the number of eosinophils in your blood.

Absolute basophil count (Baso.#)

This is the number of basophils in your blood.

Chemistry & Serum

The chemistry panel checks substances in your blood that show how your organs and body systems are working.

Sodium (Na)

Sodium is a mineral that helps control how much fluid is in your body, your blood pressure, and how your nerves and muscles work.

Potassium (K)

Potassium is a mineral that your heart and muscles need to work properly. It also helps balance fluids inside your cells.

Chloride (Cl)

Chloride is a mineral that works with sodium to balance fluids in your body. It is also part of the acid in your stomach.

Magnesium (Mg)

Magnesium is a mineral your body uses for hundreds of jobs, including muscle and nerve function, making proteins, and controlling blood sugar.

Bicarbonate (CO₂)

Bicarbonate, a form of CO₂, shows how balanced the acid levels are in your body. Your kidneys and lungs work together to keep this steady.

Calcium (Ca)

Calcium is a mineral your body needs for strong bones, muscle movement, nerve signals, and blood clotting.

ALT (alanine aminotransferase) (SGPT / ALT)

ALT is a substance made mostly in the liver. It is released into your blood when liver cells are damaged. It is a measure of liver health.

LDH (lactate dehydrogenase) (LDH)

LDH is found in almost every cell in your body. It is released into your blood when cells are damaged or die. It is a general sign of cell breakdown.

Alkaline phosphatase (ALP)

ALP is found in your liver, bile ducts, and bones. Higher levels can be related to liver, bile duct, or bone changes.

Bilirubin

Bilirubin is a yellow substance made when old red blood cells break down. Your liver processes it and removes it from your body.

Chemistry & Serum

Creatinine (Cr)

Creatinine is a waste product made by your muscles. Your kidneys filter it out of your blood, so it is used to check kidney function.

Also see: BUN

Blood urea nitrogen (BUN)

BUN measures a waste product called urea, which is made when your body breaks down protein. Your kidneys filter urea out of your blood.

Also see: Creatinine

Albumin (Alb)

Albumin is the most common protein in your blood. It is made by your liver. It helps keep fluid balanced in your body and carries things like vitamins and hormones.

Globulin

Globulin is a group of proteins in your blood, including antibodies. It is found by subtracting albumin from your total protein.

Total protein (TP)

This measures the total amount of albumin and globulin in your blood.

Glucose

Glucose is the sugar your body uses for energy. Hormones called insulin and glucagon control your blood sugar levels.

Immunoglobulin A (IgA)

IgA is a type of antibody found mainly in the lining of your nose, throat, and gut, as well as in saliva and tears. It helps protect these areas from germs.

Immunoglobulin G (IgG)

IgG is the most common antibody in your blood. It gives long-term protection against bacteria and viruses. It is the only immunoglobulin that can be replaced using a donor blood product (immunoglobulin).

Immunoglobulin M (IgM)

IgM is the largest antibody and the first one your body makes when it meets a new germ. It is good at triggering other parts of your immune system to respond quickly.