

# Lab or Other Test Monitoring- Questions & Answers

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## **Why do I need to have labs and/or other tests monitored?**

There is more than one reason why you may need to have labs or other tests monitored:

- For medications and treatments: Lab tests are important for monitoring your responses to medications and treatments as well as their side effects. If lab values are not improving, your provider may adjust the dose or switch to a different medication or treatment. If lab values are too far out of range, that may be a sign that your body does not tolerate that medication, treatment or dose. Your provider may decide to change the dose of your medicine or put you on a different treatment.
- For diagnosis, screening, monitoring, and prognosis (outlook): Labs and other tests are important for monitoring improvement or worsening of specific diseases. Changes in your disease may show up in lab tests before you start to have symptoms. Monitoring labs lets your provider know if there is a change in your health status that may require them to start or change a treatment plan.

## **Can I have my tests performed at a facility near my home?**

Yes, you can have tests performed at any facility you want. **It is critical that you notify your care team where you choose to have your labs drawn in order for them to review your results on time.** However, test results will be delivered to your provider sooner if you use a Michigan Medicine testing facility. This is because results from our facilities are recorded directly into our electronic information system. This allows results to be reviewed as soon as they are ready.

## **How soon will my provider get my test results?**

- If Michigan Medicine/MLabs are used: Most laboratory test results take 24-48 hours to be reported. If the lab test needs to be sent out, those take up to 3-weeks to be reported. The results are then sent to an electronic mailbox for your provider to review.
- If Non-Michigan Medicine labs are used: Reporting the test results may take about the same amount of time (24-48 hours), but getting those results to your provider will take longer. Some laboratories fax results to us, we process them and then we deliver them to the provider's electronic mailbox. Other laboratories' results are available in an electronic exchange. However, these are passive systems. **Passive** means that your provider or clinic will not be notified that the results are available. They may ask that you manage this by sending them a portal message with the date and location where you had labs or other tests done. Then, they will know to go look for the results.

## **Where are Michigan Medicine/MLabs blood draw stations located?**

Visit the following link to open a pdf with all Michigan Medicine MLabs locations and hours: <https://michmed.org/jO40w>

## **Will I need to fast (stop eating) before having my blood drawn?**

Most lab tests do not require fasting.

- Ask your provider if your specific ordered tests require fasting. If you are between office visits, consider sending a portal message to ask this question.
- The most commonly monitored test that requires fasting is a lipid panel.

## **I need imaging or radiology studies done, where does Michigan Medicine offer this testing?**

Visit the following link to open a webpage with all Michigan Medicine radiology locations: <https://michmed.org/6daWA>

### **Can I have imaging or radiology studies that I need performed elsewhere?**

Ask your provider if your tests can be performed elsewhere. There are some specialized tests that your provider may need you to have done at Michigan Medicine. If your provider allows an outside radiology service, they may request that the films be sent to Michigan Medicine for interpretation.

### **Will my Primary Care Physician (PCP) get a copy of my test results?**

Michigan Medicine delivers test results to the provider who ordered the tests. If you have a Michigan Medicine PCP, they will be able to view the test results in your electronic chart. However, your PCP will not be prompted to view them. Whether your PCP is part of Michigan Medicine or not, tell them about all testing ordered by other providers. This will allow your PCP to get results as they become available.

### **Will my Michigan Medicine provider see my lab or other test results before I do?**

There is a very good possibility that you will know your test results before your provider.

- **At Michigan Medicine:** When tests are performed here, results are sent to the patient portal at the same time that they are sent to providers (with rare exceptions). Providers receive many test results every day. They may be in-clinic seeing patients during regular business hours. Therefore, it is very possible that you will see your test results before your provider. Please give your provider time to review your results before submitting questions through the patient portal.
- **Other Testing Facilities:** When you use non-Michigan Medicine testing locations, your results take longer to get to us. If an outside testing site sends results directly to you, it is very likely that you will see the results before your provider. To make sure that your provider receives results of your tests done at non-Michigan Medicine locations, let your Michigan

Medicine provider know when and where you had tests done so they can look for those test results.

**Is there a way for me to see if an order for a test has been placed, or if it's still good or has expired?**

As of May 2021, open orders do not display on the Michigan Medicine patient portal. Right now, the only way to tell if you have available orders for tests is to contact your testing facility to see if a valid order is available.

**How do I know if my orders at a non-Michigan Medicine testing facility are current?**

It is your responsibility to contact your local testing facility to make sure orders are available and up-to-date. Each testing facility has its own policies about:

- How long they will accept standing orders
- When orders will be accepted for tests required in the future

We are happy to fax orders you need, but cannot keep up on each outside testing facility's policies.

## Am I really due for blood work / other tests again?

If you have testing performed at Michigan Medicine and you are signed up for the portal, you can tell the last time you had a test performed by doing the following:

1. Log into the portal
2. Click on Test Results at the top of the screen.
3. Find the specific test and look for the date of that test (see image below).

The screenshot shows the MyChart by Epic patient portal interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Menu', 'Visits', 'Messages', 'Test Results' (highlighted with a red box), and 'Medications'. The 'Test Results' section displays a table of test results with columns for 'Test', 'Ordered By', and 'Date'. The 'COMPREHENSIVE METABOLIC PANEL' test is highlighted with a red box, showing it was ordered by Jenny Naiti Hsu, MD, on May 22, 2020. Other tests listed include BI MAMMOGRAM SCREENING, DVU UPPER EXTREMITY DVT, XR FOOT, XR ANKLE, MR Foot, and CT Abdomen Pelvis.

Test	Ordered By	Date
BI MAMMOGRAM SCREENING	Jenny Naiti Hsu, MD	Dec 12, 2020
DVU UPPER EXTREMITY DVT	Julia Chen, MD	Nov 17, 2020
XR FOOT	Kristen Elizabeth Podd, PA-C	Sep 28, 2020
XR ANKLE	Kristen Elizabeth Podd, PA-C	Sep 28, 2020
MR Foot	Jenny Naiti Hsu, MD	Sep 4, 2020
XR FOOT	Jenny Naiti Hsu, MD	Aug 25, 2020
US ABDOMEN	Jenny Naiti Hsu, MD	Jun 9, 2020
CT Abdomen Pelvis	Jenny Naiti Hsu, MD	Jun 1, 2020
COMPREHENSIVE METABOLIC PANEL	Jenny Naiti Hsu, MD	May 22, 2020

## How can I tell when I'm supposed to have my next round of tests?

- If you know how often you are supposed to have tests performed, you can check in the patient portal (shown above) for the date of your last test(s.)
- If you are unsure, you can send a portal message (preferred) or call your clinic to ask.
- If you need regular blood or other tests, check with your provider for what the monitoring plan is and set a reminder for yourself when the next test is due.

**What if I do not get my labs/testing done?**

If you are having difficulty accessing care because of existing financial, social or transportation issues, please contact Michigan Medicine's Guest Assistance Program at 1(800) 888-9825. If you are able to get your tests completed and have not done so, your provider will need to evaluate whether or not it is safe for you to continue treatment with Michigan Medicine.

**Do I need an appointment to get my blood drawn or other tests performed?**

Generally, blood draws for lab tests are not scheduled. They are done on a walk-in basis at Michigan Medicine. Most other institutions would also draw blood on a walk-in basis. Special exceptions to this may include patients who need blood draws immediately before infusion or care at the Michigan Medicine Cancer Center or infusion centers. Be aware of this special process if this is your situation.

Regular x-rays are also performed on a walk-in basis. However, imaging studies like MRI, CT, ultrasounds and other special tests require an appointment.

**I have been using a lab near my home. Now, I am working long hours and it would be more convenient to have blood draws at a lab close to where I work. Can I have my orders faxed to a different lab?**

Yes, Michigan Medicine will work with your choice of testing sites. Please send a portal message (if you have access and time.) Be sure to give the name of the facility where you would like the order sent. If you have a more urgent need, please call your Michigan Medicine clinic. Tip: call the other lab or testing facility to be sure they received the faxed order before going in for a blood draw or other test.

## **I am going on vacation. Do I need to have my lab / other tests performed while I am on vacation?**

This question depends on how often your monitoring is and whether or not your results have been stable. Please send a portal message (if possible) to your clinic asking this question before you go on vacation. If you're unable to send a portal message, please call your clinic and ask.

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