

Thyroid-Stimulating Hormone (TSH)

What is a TSH test?

The Thyroid-Stimulating Hormone test, or TSH, is a blood test used to detect problems affecting the thyroid gland. TSH is produced when the hypothalamus releases a substance called thyrotropin-releasing hormone (TRH). TRH then triggers the pituitary gland to release TSH. TSH causes the thyroid gland to produce two hormones: triiodothyronine (T3) and thyroxine (T4). T3 and T4 help control your body's metabolism. A TSH test can determine if the thyroid is functioning properly.

- An underactive thyroid gland (hypothyroidism) can cause symptoms such as weight gain, tiredness, dry skin, constipation, a feeling of being too cold, or frequent menstrual periods.
- An overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism) can cause symptoms such as weight loss, rapid heart rate, nervousness, diarrhea, a feeling of being too hot, or irregular menstrual periods.

How is a TSH test performed?

The TSH specimen is collected by drawing a sample of blood from a vein in your arm. Your blood sample may be collected at your physician's office, at a CompuNet patient service center, or in some cases, at a health fair.

Who should have this test?

The American Thyroid Association recommends that adults older than age 35 be screened for thyroid disease with a TSH test every five years. Several organizations recommend screening women over 50, asymptomatic adults over 60, or those at high risk for thyroid disorders, such as pregnant and postpartum women.¹

What about my TSH results?

The results of your lab tests will be mailed to you. You should discuss all results of your laboratory tests with your physician. Your physician is the best source for any medical or health-related information as it relates to you personally. Please be aware that some x-rays which use iodine dye and tests where you were given radioactive materials may affect TSH test results, as do certain medications.

Thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH)
normal range for adults: 0.4 - 5.5 mIU/L*

*based on CompuNet's population, may vary with other laboratory's ranges

Screening laboratory tests alone cannot diagnose a condition. Please contact your physician with any questions and concerns as they relate to your own health.

To learn more about laboratory testing and specific tests, we recommend you visit our website, www.compunetlab.com or www.labtestsonline.org



Information sources: Quest Diagnostics Patient Health Library and Lab Tests Online

¹ <http://labtestsonline.org/understanding/analytes/tsh/test.html>