

# Blood Tests

## Why Are Blood Tests Important In Gynaecology?

Blood tests are an essential tool in understanding and managing many gynaecological conditions, including irregular periods, fertility issues, menopausal symptoms, and unexplained pelvic pain. These tests offer important insights into your hormone levels and overall health, assisting your gynaecologist in identifying underlying causes and tailoring treatment options for conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), menopause, or thyroid disorders. At Birmingham Gynaecology Clinic, a range of diagnostic blood tests is used to ensure accurate diagnosis and effective treatments designed to meet your specific needs.

Blood tests can diagnose or rule out a range of conditions such as:

- Hormonal imbalances that affect menstruation or fertility.
- Menopause and perimenopause symptoms, such as hot flushes or mood swings.
- Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), which can affect fertility and cause irregular periods.
- Thyroid issues, which may lead to changes in your menstrual cycle or energy levels.

## Common Blood Tests Used In Gynaecology

Several types of blood tests are commonly used to investigate gynaecological conditions. Depending on your symptoms, your gynaecologist may recommend one or more of the following:

- **Hormone profile:** A blood test that checks the levels of hormones such as oestrogen, progesterone, and testosterone. These hormones play a crucial role in regulating your menstrual cycle, ovulation, and fertility. Hormone tests are particularly useful for diagnosing conditions like PCOS, endometriosis, or menopausal changes.
- **Follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) and luteinising hormone (LH):** FSH and LH are important for regulating the menstrual cycle and ovulation. Testing these hormone levels can help your gynaecologist assess your ovarian function, which is particularly helpful in investigating fertility issues or assessing your stage of menopause.
- **Anti-Müllerian hormone (AMH):** AMH is a hormone produced by the ovaries, and measuring its levels can help assess your ovarian reserve, which indicates the number of eggs you have. This test is often used in fertility assessments to provide insight into your reproductive potential.
- **Thyroid function tests:** The thyroid produces hormones that regulate your metabolism, energy levels, and menstrual cycle. Blood tests to measure thyroid hormones like thyroxine (T4) and thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) are important for diagnosing conditions such as hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism, both of which can affect reproductive health.
- **Prolactin levels:** High levels of prolactin, a hormone that stimulates breast milk production, can lead to irregular periods or infertility. A blood test can check if your prolactin levels are elevated, which may indicate an underlying issue such as a pituitary gland disorder.
- **Full blood count (FBC):** This test measures the levels of red and white blood cells and platelets in your blood. A FBC is often used to check for anaemia, which can cause symptoms like fatigue and heavy periods, or to detect signs of infection.
- **C-reactive protein (CRP) and erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR):** These tests measure

inflammation in the body, which can indicate the presence of infections, endometriosis, or other inflammatory conditions affecting the reproductive system.

- **Blood glucose and Hba1c:** Testing blood glucose and Hba1c can help diagnose conditions like PCOS, which is often associated with insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome.
- **Vitamin and mineral levels:** Blood tests can assess levels of essential vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin D, B12, and iron. Deficiencies in these nutrients can affect menstrual health, fertility, and pregnancy outcomes.
- **Tumour markers:** In certain cases, blood tests may be used to measure tumour markers like CA-125, which can help in diagnosing and monitoring ovarian cancer and other gynaecological cancers.

## When Should You Have A Blood Test?

Some common scenarios where blood tests are essential include:

- **Irregular menstrual cycles:** To assess hormone levels and identify potential underlying causes like PCOS or thyroid disorders.
- **Fertility concerns:** To evaluate ovarian reserve, ovulation, and overall reproductive health.
- **Unexplained symptoms:** Such as pelvic pain, heavy or painful periods, or unexplained weight changes, which may require blood tests to diagnose conditions like endometriosis or thyroid disorders.

## How Blood Tests Are Performed

Blood tests are simple and usually involve taking a small sample of blood from a vein, typically in your arm. The sample is sent to a laboratory for analysis, and results are usually available within a few days. Some tests may require you to fast beforehand, but your gynaecologist will give you specific instructions if this is necessary.

## What Your Results Mean

Once the results of your blood tests are available, your gynaecologist will explain what they mean in relation to your symptoms and overall health. For example:

- High oestrogen or testosterone levels may suggest conditions like PCOS.
- Low FSH levels can indicate issues with ovarian function or menopause.
- Abnormal thyroid hormone levels can signal thyroid dysfunction, which can affect your menstrual cycle.

Your gynaecologist will use these results to guide further investigations or recommend treatment options. If hormone levels are imbalanced, treatments such as hormone therapy or lifestyle adjustments may be advised.

## Why Choose Birmingham Gynaecology Clinic

At Birmingham Gynaecology Clinic, we prioritise patient comfort and accuracy in all our diagnostic procedures. Our experienced team provides personalised care tailored to your specific needs. We use state-of-the-art laboratory services to ensure quick and reliable results, helping you get the answers you need to make informed decisions about your health.

### Contact us

If you have questions about diagnostic tests, including blood tests, or wish to discuss your treatment options, please contact Birmingham Gynaecology Clinic. Our team is here to provide support and help you understand your health and treatment options every step of the way.