



Sonora Quest
Laboratories

A Subsidiary of Laboratory Sciences of Arizona

High Sensitivity CRP (hs-CRP)

Cholesterol Testing May Not Be Enough

Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) is the number one cause of death in America. Stroke is number three. Cholesterol testing has been used to help identify those people who may have an increased risk of developing heart disease. 35% of CHD occurs in people whose cholesterol level is below 200 (mg/dL). Now there is a new test called High Sensitivity CRP (hs-CRP) that is useful in predicting future coronary events in these individuals.

High Sensitivity CRP (hs-CRP)

Sonora Quest is now offering the High Sensitivity CRP. With a simple blood test, your doctor can help detect if you are at risk for heart disease or help predict risk of a first heart attack up to eight years in advance.

What is CRP?

CRP (C-reactive Protein) is a protein produced in the liver that circulates in the blood. CRP levels increase when the body is fighting off an infection or when inflammation is present.

What is high sensitivity CRP (hs-CRP)?

High sensitivity CRP is a blood test that is able to detect small amounts of C-reactive Protein or low grade inflammation.

What is the relationship between the heart and CRP?

Blockages in blood vessels, called plaque, are collections of products contained in cells, including CRP. Elevated levels of CRP may predict risk of first heart attack up to eight years in advance.

How does an increased CRP level affect me?

Men with high levels of CRP have three times the risk of a heart attack and two times the risk of a stroke, compared to men with lower levels of CRP. In women, elevated CRP levels may increase the risk of a heart attack or stroke seven-fold.

Should I have my high sensitivity CRP level measured?

Elevated levels of CRP may predict risk of heart disease up to eight years in advance; even in individuals where no other risk factors, such as high cholesterol, smoking, or family history of heart disease are present.

If my high sensitivity CRP is elevated, does this mean I am going to have a heart attack?

The high sensitivity CRP only measures potential risk of heart disease, not who will develop heart disease. CRP is elevated when the body is fighting off an infection or inflammation. It is recommended to have a high sensitivity CRP level test performed and use this as a baseline to which subsequent high sensitivity CRP results can be compared. If the first result is elevated, testing should be repeated three to four weeks later. This is to rule out low-grade infection or inflammation.

Is it possible to reduce an elevated CRP level?

Yes, with proper treatment, CRP levels can be reduced. The risk of recurrent coronary events may also be decreased.

Do I need any additional tests besides the hs-CRP?

High sensitivity CRP should be used in conjunction with cholesterol and HDL testing. Studies have shown that the addition of cholesterol and HDL (high-density lipoprotein) cholesterol to the hs-CRP will improve the predictability of potential risk.

Is there any certain age that I should have my CRP tested?

All current studies have been performed on middle-aged men and women, as well as the elderly. No data is available for the benefits of testing in children or young adults.

References:

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