Understanding the theDr.com Comprehensive Health Panel

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What is a blood chemistry panel?

A blood chemistry analysis (i.e.: a blood test) provides key information about one's health within various systems of the body, and as a whole. It allows a healthcare provider to assess the degree of health or disease in a patient, and to screen and identify imbalances in physiological metabolism and function. A blood chemistry analysis is the most efficient, effective, and affordable general screening test available. Blood chemistry results can be evaluated using either conventional or functional laboratory ranges. The prevention of disease and whether a developing health condition in its initial ("subclinical") stage is discovered depends significantly on whether a healthcare practitioner uses the conventional or functional laboratory ranges to interpret a person's blood test results.

Where do conventional (or "pathological") and functional lab ranges come from?

It is a common misconception to assume that the "normal" ranges that appear on blood test results are agreed upon by a panel of international healthcare practitioners who define for us what health and sickness is. The reality is that a standard set of laboratory ranges indicating what is healthy and what is pathological does not exist, and conventional laboratory ranges vary from lab to lab. This is because the mean ranges on lab reports are calculated from samples taken in that particular lab only, using the results of individuals within the community who have reason to go to the doctor (i.e. many of whom are ill or have a disease). Conventional laboratory ranges are thus not based on a standard of health and optimal physiological function, but rather, on the physiology of people who are seeking medical attention and getting lab work done. Additionally, these ranges tend to be very broad.

Functional laboratory ranges, on the other hand, are decided based on optimal physiological function (i.e. the blood chemistry of a healthy, well-functioning person). The functional range is considered "subclinical" and can indicate the early stages of disease. Much of the research founding functional ranges has been presented by well-respected organizations such as the American Association of Clinical Chemists (AACC). These ranges have been determined by healthcare practitioners and researchers who embrace the principles of preventative medicine, which keeps in mind and upholds the importance of diet and nutrition, supplements, exercise, and lifestyle habits as a means to achieve and maintain optimal health. The functional range of health or "normal" tends to be more narrow. Some traditional healthcare providers do not embrace the concept of a functional range.

What can a functional blood panel tell us?

Using functional ranges allows us to be proactive in addressing "out of normal range" biomarkers before they develop into or contribute to an illness or major imbalance. A typical blood panel screens for blood sugar, lipids, renal (kidney), hepatic (liver), biliary (gallbladder), thyroid, cardiovascular, immune, and hematological (blood) disorders and risk. Certain biomarkers on a blood test can also indicate acute or chronic infection, systemic inflammation, and nutrient deficiencies. A panel that is comprehensive in its biomarkers also allows us to determine conditions such as anemia, thyroid problems, digestive problems, diabetes, allergies, and stroke potential.

Conventional medical training is concerned with the diagnosis of disease. It is very common to find medical professionals waiting for a person's numbers to go beyond the range of "normal" and reach the pathological range. Patients are usually told that their numbers are borderline and that an eye will have to be kept on them, while rarely discussing ways to prevent the numbers from climbing or sinking further out of range. A practitioner using functional ranges for blood test interpretation, on the other hand, will look at biomarkers that are out of functional range with the intent to prevent the progression of imbalance and the development of disease.

Conventional and functional laboratory range differences

Functional Laboratory Ranges	**Conventional** Laboratory Ranges
• Functional ranges have been researched and established by well-respected organizations. • The functional range is considered subclinical, which can indicate the beginning stages of disease. • Biomarkers out of the functional range can indicate that something is not as good as it should be, or indicate a developing condition that is not bad enough to treat medically. • When lab results fall within the patterns of a functional imbalance, strategies such as lifestyle, diet, nutrition, supplements, and other non-invasive therapies can be recommended. • The functional range is more true to what is considered a healthy, well-functioning physiology.	• Most health practitioners today use only the pathological ranges and do not address the subclinical findings until they become a serious medical condition. • Conventional ranges tend to be very broad. • Traditional/conventional healthcare providers usually do not embrace the concept of a functional range. • Conventional ranges are primarily used for diagnosing disease, not as a tool for disease prevention. • Standard blood tests are not comprehensive, and it can be difficult to request a full blood panel from a doctor (for example: one must have a very good reason to request a full thyroid panel, other than just the TSH biomarker on a typical blood test).

Why we recommend a functional blood panel for our clients

We highly recommend that our clients have a blood chemistry analysis, especially if they have not had a comprehensive evaluation in recent years. Blood chemistry results give us a good look into the health and physical function of an individual and can help us detect many health problems, which can be prevented and/or managed effectively with nutritional and lifestyle changes.

We find that it is important to have a comprehensive blood chemistry panel done for a complete health evaluation. While some blood chemistry markers stand alone in providing key information about one's health (such as HemoglobinA_1C as an identifying marker for Diabetes), most markers must be considered along with other biomarkers to discover patterns, assess probabilities, determine a diagnosis, and to put a preventative care plan in place. Initial tests allow us to establish a baseline of biomarkers which we use to track a person's health and improvement over a period of time.

TheDr.com Comprehensive Health Panel

TheDr.com Comprehensive Health Panel contains 32 tests with 134 biomarkers. The retail price is $2,778. Our price is $507. While all of these markers can all be ordered by your doctor, unfortunately, many find that either their doctor is not willing to order all the biomakers or their insurance will not cover the complete panel. If a person's insurance was to cover all 145 biomarkers, most find that their co-pay is more that $507 and purchasing it through our discounted portal ends up saving money.

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