

A CA-125 test is a blood test that can help detect ovarian cancer by measuring the levels of the protein CA-125 in your blood. It is normal to have some CA-125 in your blood, but levels may be higher if you have certain cancers such as ovarian cancer. However CA-125 levels may also be raised for other reasons, such as with a non-cancerous ovarian cyst.

This leaflet will help answer the following questions:

- What is involved in a CA-125 blood test?
- Why has my GP recommended that I have a CA-125 test?
- What is a normal CA-125 level and how accurate is the blood test?
- What will happen next?
- Where can I find more information and support?

What is involved in a CA-125 blood test?

The CA-125 blood test can be done at your GP surgery. A small amount of blood will be taken from a vein in your arm and sent to a laboratory to test your CA-125 level.

If you are bleeding as part of your menstrual cycle, your doctor may delay your CA-125 blood test as this can affect your test results.

Why has my GP recommended that I have a CA-125 test?

Your GP may have recommended a CA-125 blood test because you might be at risk of ovarian cancer. This may be because you have symptoms such as persistent bloating, feeling full quickly, a loss of appetite, pelvic or abdominal pain, or needing to pass urine more often.

A CA-125 blood test may also be recommended as a way to monitor the treatment of ovarian cancer.

What is a normal CA-125 level and how accurate is the blood test?

A normal level of CA-125 is usually less than 35 units per millilitre (u/ml). However, some women naturally have higher levels.

A raised CA-125 level could be a sign of cancer but there are other conditions that can also cause a raised level, such as non-cancerous ovarian cysts or endometriosis.

A CA-125 can indicate an issue but it will not identify all ovarian cancers. So if your symptoms remain or get worse, please speak to your GP, even if your CA-125 result is normal.

Patient safety notice

- If your symptoms change, progress, or worsen please inform your GP practice urgently. If you can't contact your GP practice, please contact 111 or go directly to your nearest Accident and Emergency department.
- Ensure that your healthcare professional has your most up-to-date contact number and address.
- If you will need a translator for your appointment, please contact the clinic or hospital directly to let them know beforehand.

What will happen next?

Your results can take up to 14 days to come back. If you have not heard from your GP practice within 2 weeks, please contact them.

If your CA-125 level is raised, your GP will discuss the next steps with you which may include further investigations or a gynaecology referral.

Where can I find more information and support?

You can access further information and support through [Target Ovarian Cancer](#)

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your GP practice.