

# THYROID FUNCTION TESTS

## Why are thyroid function tests done ?

A thyroid function test is done to see how much thyroid hormone is present in your blood and helps to understand the function of the thyroid gland.

## Which hormones are checked ?

The thyroid gland, a butterfly shaped gland in your neck, releases 2 hormones into the blood - T3 and T4. These hormones are produced under the control of another hormone called TSH which is released from the pituitary gland located at the base of the brain. T3, T4 and TSH together form the thyroid function test.

## How are the tests interpreted?

By assessing the level and the relationship between the thyroid hormones (T3, T4) and the stimulus (TSH) your doctor can know whether your thyroid is normal, underactive or overactive. T3 and T4 has an inverse log relationship with TSH i.e. small changes in T3 and T4 cause large inverse changes in TSH except in certain situations. Some labs do free hormones and others do total hormones. Both free hormone and total hormones give roughly the same information, but the total hormone testing is preferred during pregnancy (interpretation is according to the pregnant status).

## Are there any medicines that interfere with TFT?

Biotin can lead to aberrant results and should be stopped 2 days before doing the tests.

## What precautions have to be taken on the day of the test?

The test should preferably be done in a fasting state before 8 am or it should be done around the same time of the day everytime you do the test

Like any other test, what is normal level of thyroid hormones depends on the context - this may differ from the values printed as 'reference range' in your report. This is especially true in pregnancy. The test results should therefore be interpreted taking into account your other clinical details.

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