

Homocysteine Blood Test

What is Homocysteine?

Homocysteine is a sulfur-containing amino acid that occurs naturally in all humans. It is broken down in the body through two metabolic pathways. The chemical changes that must occur to break down homocysteine require the presence of folic acid (also called folate) and vitamins B6 and B12. The level of homocysteine in the blood is influenced by the presence of these substances.

Why is it important to monitor homocysteine levels?

Many risk factors, including family history of heart disease, smoking, obesity, lack of exercise, diabetes, high levels of low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL or "bad" cholesterol), low levels of high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL or "good" cholesterol), and high blood pressure have been documented to increase the risk of stroke and heart disease.

With so many other risk factors, it has been difficult to determine whether high levels of homocysteine are an independent risk factor for the development these diseases. However, a substantial number of controlled, well-designed, and well-documented studies have shown that individuals who have high levels of homocysteine in the blood are at increased risk of developing blocked blood vessels, a condition known as occlusive arterial disease or at risk to worsen atherosclerosis ("hardening of the arteries").

We recommend screening as part of a cardiac risk assessment for individuals who have a family history of coronary artery disease but no obvious symptoms of heart disease. The level of homocysteine in the blood can be measured with our simple blood test.

Call our HealthQuest Radio Hotline at 800-794-1855 to schedule your appointment today, call for pricing!