



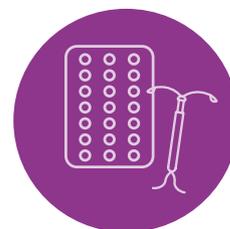
Checking follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) levels

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Checking FSH levels



Checking follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) levels is a useful test in a number of scenarios.

FERTILITY INVESTIGATIONS

FSH is recommended in fertility investigations as it gives an estimation of egg reserve and is a guide to how soon referral and assisted conception is required. The result is only relevant if performed at the correct time of the cycle because of cyclical variation – performed at day 2-5 of a menstrual cycle.

MENOPAUSE

FSH is a useful test to help confirm menopause in women who are earlier than expected, i.e. age 45 or less. NICE clearly tells us in their menopause guideline of 2015 that performing an FSH level is not required in women with menopausal symptoms who are of menopausal age (45-55).

The result does not give any indication of when the menopause will occur, how bad the symptoms will be, or how long they will last.

CONTRACEPTION

FSH is also a useful test in women using progestogenic methods of contraception who want to know when they can stop their method. FSRH guidance on contraception in women aged over 40 is clear:

Women aged 50 or over:

If one FSH level is over 30IU/l then menopause can be assumed, but she will require ongoing contraception for 12 months after the test.

If the FSH level is less than 30IU/l then menopause cannot be assumed and the FSH level should be repeated after 12 months.

NOTE:

❗ DO NOT test women while using combined hormonal contraception as FSH is suppressed and will not provide a reliable result.

❗ FSH can be tested when using depot medroxyprogesterone acetate (DMPA) but the test should be performed prior to the subsequent injection to increase reliability of the result.