

## **Why We Use Optimal Lab Test Ranges**

Laboratory testing is a critical part of evaluating a patient's health status. Most traditional doctors look at clinical blood test results based on average ranges. Each lab provides a reference range and these ranges can vary from one lab to another. Only when your lab results are outside of these ranges does the doctor become concerned. In truth, when a lab marker shows up outside of these norms, a disease process is already well established. On the other hand, many people who do have symptoms often have "normal" blood test results and wonder why they feel bad if the tests say they are okay.

The problem is that the medical lab test ranges are based on an average of values derived from studies done on the average American population. Unfortunately, the average American isn't exactly a pillar of health.

In our office we generally look at **optimal** lab ranges rather than the average standard medical lab ranges. These tighter ranges more accurately show if a problem is present or developing. For example, the standard blood sugar range most commonly used by laboratories is 65 to 110. If your glucose is under 65 you may have low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) and if it's over 110 you may have diabetes. However, we use a narrower range of 85 to 100. By doing this, we are able catch a problem in its early stage and deal with it before it becomes a serious health issue.

Early warning signs are often missed by doctors because most follow the range guidelines recommended by the labs. This allows the disease process to develop and become serious before action is taken. Let me share a personal experience that illustrates this.

Shortly after my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday I woke up one morning with severe abdominal pain. My wife drove me to the hospital and a battery of tests was begun. I firmly believed I had appendicitis. However, the lab tests showed only a slightly elevated white cell count which the doctors interpreted as an indication that there was no infection. As I lay in the hospital for 1 ½ days they did some other tests looking for what might be causing my severe abdominal pain. Finally things became serious enough that the surgeon made a large midline incision to explore what might be going on and found that my appendix had ruptured.

In my case my body had been working quite well in controlling the infection in the appendix. However, the infection finally got the upper hand. Because this was missed, what could have been a fairly simple appendectomy that would put me out of work for only a few days turned into major surgery and a life threatening situation that took me several weeks to recover from.

In another example, a patient of mine went to Urgent Care with nausea and abdominal pain so severe that she thought she had appendicitis. Her blood work was "normal" according to her doctors. We looked more closely at her lab results and, using the tighter ranges we prefer, found that she actually had an infection. We treated her by boosting her immune function and she responded very nicely.

Another patient had severe Crohn's Disease. Her lab tests were pretty much normal by traditional standards, but we found 23 different blood markers that were outside of the tighter lab ranges! These tighter standards revealed early anemia, low vitamin D, pituitary malfunction (often seen in intestinal problems like Crohn's, but missed in traditional evaluations), poor protein absorption, infection, and low levels of vitamin C and Zinc. The patient began a personalized program of whole food supplements and

herbs to strengthen her body's functions and within five weeks she reported having an improved appetite, more energy, better sleep and a general overall feeling of wellbeing.

I have seen hundreds of similar situations in my office. Blood tests are only good if they are correctly interpreted. If your doctor runs blood work on you and tells you that everything is okay but you feel ill and you don't feel that things are okay, you are very likely correct. Maybe some different tests are needed, but it's very likely that by tightening up the lab ranges a clear imbalance may be found. Having your blood work evaluated correctly can make all the difference!

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