

## What is hs-CRP?

Hs-CRP (high-sensitivity C-reactive protein) is a lab test that measures protein in the blood and signals acute inflammation. Inflammation is the process by which the body responds to injury or an infection. Clinical research and studies suggest inflammation is important in atherosclerosis, the process in which fatty deposits build up in the inner lining of arteries.

### What is C-Reactive Protein?

C-reactive protein is produced by the liver. The level of CRP rises when there is a body-wide (systemic) inflammation. The CRP test is considered a general test, not a specific one. In other words, it can reveal that there is inflammation present in the body, but it cannot tell you where it is. Hs-CRP is a more sensitive CRP test, used to determine risk for heart disease.

### How is hs-CRP used to predict a repeat heart attack or stroke?

A growing number of studies have examined whether hs-CRP can predict recurrent cardiovascular disease, stroke and death in different settings. High levels of hs-CRP consistently predict recurrent coronary events in patients with unstable angina and acute myocardial infarction (heart attack).

### How is hs-CRP used to predict a first heart attack or stroke?

Scientific studies have found that the higher the hs-CRP levels, the higher the risk of having a heart attack.

### What is the normal range for hs-CRP?

Generally there is no CRP detectable in the blood. If hs-CRP level is:

- Lower than 1.0 mg/L, there is low risk of developing cardiovascular disease
- Between 1.0 and 3.0 mg/L, you are at average risk
- Higher than 3.0 mg/L, you are at high risk

### Does a high hs-CRP always mean heart disease or stroke?

A positive test means you have inflammation in the body. This may be due to a variety of conditions, including infection, rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease (IBS), pneumonia or a number of different causes. As with any lab test, follow-up with your doctor. He or she can help interpret your lab results and determine whether further testing is required.

#### Sources:

*Medline Plus, a service of the U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health ([www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov))*

*American Heart Association ([www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org))*

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