

UNDERSTANDING THE 'NT-proBNP' BLOOD TEST: WHY SHOULD I GET REGULAR RISK ASSESSMENTS IF I HAVE PULMONARY ARTERIAL HYPERTENSION (PAH)?

From 1 July 2024 the Government will fund a blood test called the 'NT-proBNP' test for Australians living with Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (PAH).^{1,2} This test can be done as part of a regular risk assessment to check if a person's PAH has progressed. Read the information below or chat to your doctor to learn more about the NT-proBNP test and why getting this test as part of your regular risk assessment is important.

What is the NT-proBNP test?



NT-proBNP (N-terminal pro-B-type natriuretic peptide) is a chemical that is produced by the body and released into the bloodstream in response to pressure changes inside the heart. The NT-proBNP test is a simple blood test which measures the level of NT-proBNP in the bloodstream. Results of the test can help your doctor assess what risk level your PAH is.

What happens in a risk assessment for PAH?



Risk assessments are recommended every 3-6 months for people with PAH to check how they have responded to therapy or if their disease has progressed.³ The assessment may include a number of different tests done regularly such as an overall assessment of how you feel, an assessment of how far you can walk in 6 minutes and blood tests (including NT-proBNP).³ Your doctor may also decide to do additional tests such as scans of the heart.³

Why should I have regular risk assessments if I have PAH?



Everyone experiences PAH differently. As PAH is a progressive disease, it can advance quickly, especially if left untreated and will generally worsen over time. Regular risk assessments can help detect changes in your disease early, which can optimise your treatment plan and help keep your PAH well managed.⁴

How do I get the NT-proBNP test?



This test can be arranged by your PAH specialist as part of your regular risk assessment. Don't hesitate to ask questions or seek more information from your healthcare provider.

How often should I be tested?



It is recommended that people with PAH get a risk assessment including the NT-proBNP blood test every 3-6 months.³

What happens if my NT-proBNP is high?



If your NT-proBNP levels increase over time, your doctor will assess that change with the results of other tests done in your regular risk assessment. If your overall assessment puts you at a higher risk level, then your doctor may discuss doing additional tests such as a heart scan and changing your treatment plan. In Australia, there are multiple treatment options for patients with PAH funded by the Government that can be used for different risk levels.⁵

What is the cost of testing?



The Australian Government will pay for people with PAH to have up to four (4) NT-proBNP tests every 12 months as referred by your PAH specialist.

For more information and resources on living well with PAH, scan here to visit our website



Abbreviations: NT-proBNP serum N-terminal pro-B-type natriuretic peptide. References: 1. Australian Government, Medical Services Advisory Committee Public Summary Document 1689.1. Available at [http://www.msac.gov.au/internet/msac/publishing.nsf/Content/C9953B6AC9E30E81CA25894100027F4B/\\$File/1689.1%20Final%20PSD%20-%20July%202023.pdf](http://www.msac.gov.au/internet/msac/publishing.nsf/Content/C9953B6AC9E30E81CA25894100027F4B/$File/1689.1%20Final%20PSD%20-%20July%202023.pdf) 2. Australian Government, Medicare Benefits Schedule Factsheet. Available at <https://www.mbsonline.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/Factsheet-Current> 3. Humbert M *et al.* *Eur Heart J* 2022;43:3618-3731. 4. Lung Foundation Australia. PAH Factsheet, available from <https://lungfoundation.com.au/resources/pah-fact-sheet/> 5. Australian Government, Department of Health. Medicare Benefits Schedule. Janssen-Cilag Pty Ltd, ABN 47 000 129 975, 1-5 Khartoum Road, Macquarie Park NSW 2113. Ph: 1800 226 334. CP-456992 EMVPAH0133 Date of preparation: June 2024.