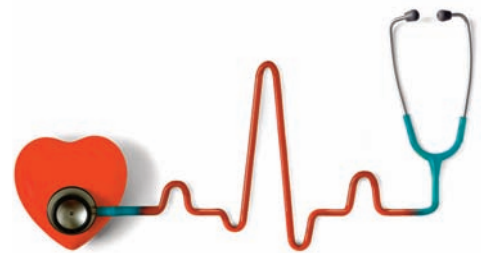




# Homocysteine Test

## | What is Homocysteine?

Homocysteine is a naturally occurring sulphur containing amino acid. It is involved in essential chemical pathways in the body and an increasing number of medical experts are saying that raised levels in the blood may be as, or more important than, raised levels of cholesterol.



## | Why can high levels be harmful?

**Heart Disease/Stroke** | Raised blood homocysteine concentrations can predict the development of heart disease and strokes in older people more precisely than the familiar risks of high cholesterol, blood pressure or smoking.

**Alzheimer's** | Homocysteine has also been shown to be a reliable marker for Alzheimer's risk and has also been implicated in migraine, dementia, declining memory, poor concentration and judgment, as well as lowered mood.

**Infertility** | High levels of homocysteine are associated with infertility too, affecting both men and women. Women with high homocysteine levels find it harder to conceive and are at risk from repeated early miscarriage. There is also evidence that high levels of homocysteine can reduce assisted reproduction success rates.

## | Could I be at risk?

If you tick any of the following boxes, you might be at risk of high levels of homocysteine:

- | **If you smoke**
- | **If you have a poor diet**
- | **If you drink excessive amounts of caffeine or alcohol**
- | **If you are overweight or have a sedentary lifestyle**
- | **If you have a family history of the above illnesses**
- | **If you have diabetes**
- | **If you are a strict vegan or vegetarian**



Homocysteine levels also increase with age. Even people with an active, healthy lifestyle may be at risk; approximately 10-15% of the population has a genetic defect contributing to raised homocysteine levels.

Whatever the state of your health a homocysteine test can help to assess your risk – allowing you to take action to reduce that risk and provide peace of mind for the future.

## | What should you do if your levels are high?



You should make dietary changes to improve your intake of B vitamins, folic acid, zinc and trimethylglycine (TMG) and take a vitamin supplement. The levels required will depend on your individual result.

It is possible to reduce your high levels of homocysteine in less than 3 months if you are careful and eat the correct nutrients and change your lifestyle. You may want to consult your GP as you may have other risk factors too.

## | How can you reduce the risks of high Homocysteine?

By taking the following steps:

- | Include recommended supplements as required
- | Quit smoking
- | Maintain a healthy, balanced diet
- | Reduce cholesterol levels
- | Lead an active lifestyle
- | Drink alcohol in moderation

