

ANTI-MULLERIAN HORMONE (AMH)

WHAT IS AMH?

Anti-Mullerian Hormone (AMH) is a hormone produced by small follicles in the ovary which contain eggs. The amount of AMH gives an indication of the number of eggs being produced, or ovarian reserve, and can be tested at any point in a woman's cycle.

The amount of AMH measurable in the blood remains constant until early adulthood and from the age of 25 levels begin to decline. From the age of 35 AMH declines steadily until it reaches zero at the menopause.

ANTI-MULLERIAN HORMONE TEST (EGG TIMER TEST)

The Anti-Mullerian Hormone (AMH) test is a blood test. It can be performed at any time throughout the menstrual cycle. It is usually performed in conjunction with an antral follicle count as a predictor of ovarian reserve, or more simply put: how many eggs you have left in reserve, hence the name 'Egg Timer Test'.

In relation to testing for AMH while on cyclic combined oral contraceptives, it is generally accepted that the Pill does not have an effect on AMH levels, but the evidence is not certain on this point. One recent article described continuous use of combined contraception (i.e. without monthly breaks) was associated with a reduction of AMH levels.

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WHO SHOULD BE TESTED?

The AMH test is performed for two primary reasons, to determine fertility status and a patient's response to fertility medication. Women under the age of 35 may be tested to determine ovarian reserve which may assist to determine optimal timing to start a family. The test can also be helpful in determining the fertility status of patients at risk of diminished ovarian reserve e.g. women with a history of ovarian failure, family history of early onset menopause, autoimmune disease, women who have undergone chemotherapy or had ovarian surgery. It is also helpful for Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) patients.

If you are undergoing fertility treatment your specialist may choose to do an AMH test to predict ovarian response to fertility medication. Lower levels of AMH may call for a larger dose of fertility medication. Although AMH levels are a factor in achieving pregnancy, low or high levels are not the only indicator for chances of conception. Your doctor will gladly advise you with respect to your particular circumstance.

AMH levels decline at predictable rates hence the AMH test is a good snapshot of current fertility; however, it is recommended to treat 'normal' results with caution. Patients should ensure ongoing monitoring for best results when planning a family and future fertility success.

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INTERPRETING AMH RESULTS

