

**Name of the test:**

Total protein

**Alternative name(s) of the test:**

None.

**What this test is used for:**

This test measures the total amount of protein in the blood. There are two classes of proteins – albumins(60% of the total protein) and globulins (40%). The total protein test also makes it possible to calculate the albumin to globulin ratio as well. The latter might often give the doctor some useful information about the underlying disease.

**When the test is ordered:**

The total protein test is performed very often as a part of a routine health checkup. It is also ordered when a liver or a kidney diseases are suspected.

Generally, the total protein test helps the physicians evaluate patients' overall health, so it is frequently used as a screening tool.

**How this test is performed:**

A blood sample is needed for the test. It is taken from a vein or from a fingertip.

**How to prepare for the test:**

No special preparation is needed. However, some conditions and medications may affect the test results.

**Interpretation of results:**

Low levels of total protein may caused by malnutrition, malabsorbtion, liver and kidney disorders. High levels of total protein may be due to different conditions, including inflammation and myeloma.

The albumin to globulin ratio may provide the doctor with some additional information about the underlying causes of either high or low total protein levels.

It is important to note that the total protein test results alone are not enough for diagnosis. So when abnormal total protein results are found, some other tests are often ordered as well.