

Aspartate aminotransferase (AST)

Aspartate aminotransferase is an enzyme which is important for amino acid biosynthesis. It is found in high amounts in heart muscle, liver and muscle cells. In lesser amounts, it is also found in other tissues.

Why the AST Test is Performed?

To diagnose and monitor liver disease. This test is mainly done along with other tests (such as ALT, ALP, and bilirubin).

How the Test is Performed and How to Prepare for the Test?

For the test a blood sample is needed without any special preparation.

What Abnormal Results Mean?

The normal range is 10 to 34 IU/L.

Diseases that affect liver cells increase the levels of AST. However, increased levels of AST alone do not diagnose liver disease. Measuring ALT at the same time can help narrow down the cause of the abnormal test results.

An increase in AST levels may be due to:

- Acute kidney failure
- Cirrhosis
- Heart attack
- Hemochromatosis
- Hemolytic anemia
- Hepatitis
- Liver ischemia
- Liver tumor
- Medicines that are toxic to the liver
- Mononucleosis
- Muscle disease or trauma
- Pancreatitis

AST levels may also increase after:

- Burns (deep)
- Heart procedures
- Seizure
- Surgery

Alternative Names

Serum glutamic-oxaloacetic transaminase (SGOT)

Useful Information

AST levels may rise during pregnancy and after exercise.