

Name of the test

Liver Panel

Alternative name(s) of the test

Liver Function Tests; Hepatic Function Panel

What is this test used for?

The liver is one of the vital organs in a human body – it has many important functions including metabolism and detoxification of various substances, synthesis of proteins and enzymes, producing bile, storing vitamins, etc.

A liver panel is not a single test, but a group of tests that are performed together. It includes several tests that can be used to evaluate the liver function. Depending on a clinical laboratory, tests included in a liver panel may vary, however often these tests are: ALT (alanine aminotransferase), AST (aspartate aminotransferase), ALP (alkaline phosphatase), GGT (gamma-glutamyl transferase), total protein, albumin, total bilirubin, direct bilirubin. These tests help evaluate health of the liver, detect its damage and monitor the condition when a person is already diagnosed with a liver disorder.

When is the test ordered?

A liver panel is performed:

- to evaluate liver function
- to screen for and detect liver damage – the damage may be caused by some medications, alcoholism and liver diseases.
- To detect a liver disease, when a patient has some symptoms of a liver disorder (like jaundice, dark urine, light-colored stool, nausea and vomiting, itching). However these symptoms often do not show up at early stages of liver disease.
- when a patient is already diagnosed with a liver disorder, a liver panel can be ordered at intervals to monitor the health of the liver and evaluate the effectiveness of treatment.

How is this test performed?

A blood sample is taken from a vein.

How to prepare for the test

Fasting may be required. Also, some medicines may affect the test results, so it is important to first consult with a doctor and get detailed instructions about any preparation needed.

Interpretation of results

The test results must be interpreted by a doctor.

Abnormal liver panel results may be due to liver damage. The liver damage may be caused by various substances (for ex.: alcohol, some drugs) and diseases – acute hepatitis, chronic hepatitis, cirrhosis, liver tumors, etc.

In patients with a diagnosed liver disorder, it is important to check how the pattern of liver panel results changes over time – whether it shows worsening or improvement of liver function.

The tests included in liver panel show different results depending on the underlying disorder. For example, ALT and AST levels are very high when the patient has acute hepatitis. In patients with chronic hepatitis ALT and AST levels are moderately elevated. Increased bilirubin level may be caused by the bile duct obstruction.

To learn more about these separate tests, please visit the “Tests” section of our website: vistamedi.ge

It is important to note that a liver panel is not used to diagnose a particular disorder, but rather, it is used to evaluate and monitor the function and health of the liver. For diagnosis, additional tests are usually required.