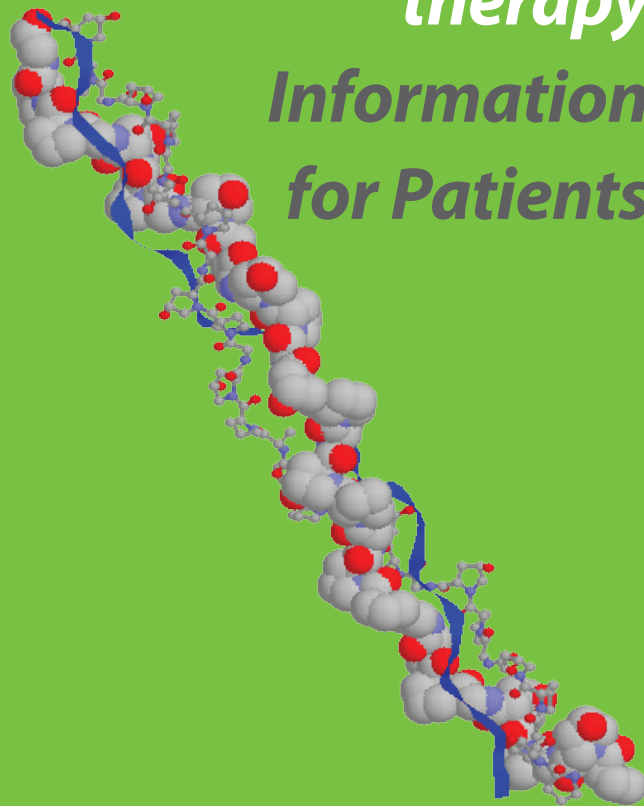


*Type III Procollagen
and monitoring
Methotrexate
therapy
Information
for Patients*



Your Doctor has referred you for a Type III Procollagen blood test.

The following information is provided for you on the role of this test in monitoring methotrexate therapy and the cost of this test.

Background

Procollagen is part of collagen. Collagen is well known as an important structural component of the connective tissue of skin, organs and bone. Type III Procollagen is a protein derived from synthesis and deposition of Procollagen in the tissues.

Increased levels of Type III Procollagen can be found in conditions of abnormal turnover of connective tissue, either excessive accumulation or excessive breakdown of connective tissue.

Different types of liver fibrosis and liver cirrhosis may increase serum levels of Type III Procollagen.

Methotrexate

Methotrexate is an important therapy for some dermatology and rheumatology conditions. However it's use carries some risk of causing liver fibrosis. Previously, to assess whether fibrosis was developing in the liver, a liver biopsy was used. This is an invasive procedure, which must be done under sterile conditions, where a needle is inserted into the liver and a sample of tissue taken for microscopic examination. This procedure does carry a small risk of further complications, such as bleeding and liver damage and is not undertaken without careful consideration in an appropriate setting.

Use of Type III Procollagen

Recent literature has shown that Type III Procollagen measurements may be used to monitor patients for the development of liver fibrosis, secondary to treatment with methotrexate. This means these patients may avoid having a liver biopsy with its associated risks. Type III Procollagen can be measured from a simple blood test, collected at any of our usual collection centres. There is no need to fast or stop any medications prior to this test.

Type III Procollagen test at WDP

The laboratory performs the Type III Procollagen test using an assay developed by Orion Diagnostica (Australian Laboratory Services). Use of this test method was recently published in the British Journal of Dermatology, 2005 Mar;152 (3) 444-50. The authors of this paper noted that use of the Type III Procollagen assay would allow methotrexate therapy to become a more acceptable option for patients. This was because patients may have previously been dissuaded from considering Methotrexate as its use carried the threat of repeated liver biopsy. However now they could use Methotrexate and have Type III Procollagen testing performed instead.

Charge for Type III Procollagen

The charge for the Type III procollagen test is \$95.

Please be aware that there is no Medicare rebate available currently for the Type III Procollagen test and you will be asked to pay the full \$95 amount for this test.

References

British Journal of Dermatology, 2001, Jan 144(1) 100-3
Orion Diagnostica (Australian Laboratory Services) PIIINP RIA kit, April 2005
British Journal of Dermatology, 2005 Mar 152 (3) 444-50