



ExitLabs®

Patients are often confused by laboratory results. They want information on the test itself, reference values and the significance of the results. ExitCare® is committed to providing laboratory results to patients in a meaningful way through ExitLabs®. ExitLabs contains information on over 300 common lab tests—with data that includes reference values derived from *The Manual of Laboratory & Diagnostic Tests* by Pagana. Here is a featured example of Potassium:

Provides definition and sets clear expectations for patient.

Aids in patient comprehension of results; provides proper context.

Allows healthcare providers to document the patient's actual value.

Potassium (K)

This is a test to determine whether your potassium concentration is within normal limits and to help evaluate an electrolyte imbalance; to monitor chronic or acute *hyperkalemia* (high potassium) or *hypokalemia* (low potassium).

Potassium is an electrolyte, a positively charged molecule that works with other electrolytes, such as sodium, chloride, and total carbon dioxide (CO₂) to help regulate the amount of fluid in the body, stimulate muscle contraction, and maintain a stable acid-base balance. Potassium is present in all body fluids, but most potassium is found within your cells. Only about two percent is present in fluids outside the cells and in the liquid part of the blood (called serum or plasma). Because the blood concentration of potassium is so small, minor changes can have significant consequences. If potassium levels go too low or too high, your health may be in considerable danger: you are at risk for developing shock, respiratory failure, or heart rhythm disturbances. An abnormal concentration can alter the function of neuromuscular tissue; for example, the heart muscle may lose its ability to contract.

PREPARATION FOR TEST:

A blood sample is obtained by inserting a needle into a vein in the arm.

NORMAL VALUE:

Adult/elderly: 3.5-5.0 mEq/L

Child: 3.4-4.7 mEq/L

Infant: 4.1-5.3 mEq/L

Newborn: 3.9-5.9 mEq/L

YOUR VALUE IS: _____

MEANING OF TEST

Your caregiver will go over the test results with you and discuss the importance and meaning of your results, as well as treatment options and the need for additional tests if necessary.

OBTAINING THE TEST RESULTS

It is your responsibility to obtain your test results. Ask the lab or department performing the test when and how you will get your results.

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