

# Cancer Biomarkers

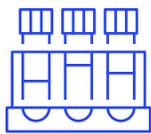
Biomarkers are genes, proteins, or other substances that show up on certain tests and give doctors more information about a person's cancer. Even if two people have the same type of cancer, the cancer cells may not be exactly the same. Every cancer has certain features that affect how it grows and how that cancer will respond to treatment.



## How are biomarkers used for people with cancer?

Biomarkers can tell doctors a lot about a cancer. The test results might show:

- What the best treatment for the person's cancer might be
- If a cancer is more likely to grow and spread
- If a treatment is working
- If a cancer has come back



## How is biomarker testing done?

Most biomarker tests are done on cancer cells or blood. This means your doctor will need to get samples of your cancer cells or blood.

- For a solid tumor (such as breast, lung, colon, or prostate cancer), samples are often taken during a biopsy or surgery. If a sample of the tumor is hard to get, a blood sample might be used instead.
- For blood cancers (such as a leukemia or lymphoma), samples can be taken from the blood or bone marrow.
- For some cancers, samples can be taken from other body fluids (such as urine).

Your sample will be sent to a lab, where it will be tested for biomarkers.



## Should I get biomarker testing?

There are many types of biomarkers, and more are being found all the time. Some types of cancer, such as lung, breast, and colon cancer, may be tested for biomarkers.

For some other types of cancer, biomarker testing might not be useful yet. Check with your cancer care team about whether biomarker testing can be done for your type of cancer.



## What questions should I ask about biomarkers?

Talk with your cancer care team about whether you should get biomarker testing. You might want to ask:

- Can my cancer be tested for biomarkers? Why or why not?
- Where can I get the test done?
- What will it cost to have biomarker testing?
- Will my insurance pay for biomarker testing?
- If my cancer has a biomarker, what does that mean for my treatment?
- If my cancer has a biomarker, what does that mean for others in my family?

To learn more about cancer biomarkers and how they are used, visit [cancer.org/biomarkertests](https://cancer.org/biomarkertests) or call us at **1-800-227-2345**. We're here when you need us.