

Contact Us Toll Free at 1.866.208.3430

Avonex Laboratory Testing

Overview

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a disease that affects many parts of the body. Because of this, patients that live with MS receive many laboratory tests. These tests usually occur more frequently at the start of disease-modifying therapy and become less frequent as patients continue their medicines. Since lab tests can be very confusing, Diplomat Specialty Pharmacy has prepared the following summary for lab tests specific to Avonex.

Avonex (Interferon beta-1a)

White Blood Cell count (WBC count)

- A few patients have experienced low blood cell counts while taking Avonex. Since white blood cells are used to maintain immunity, a decrease in WBC counts can lower your body's ability to fight infections.
- It is important that WBC counts be measured regularly. After starting Avonex, most neurologists measure WBC counts at 1 month, 3 months, and 6 months. Then most patients are measured yearly.
- If a patient's WBC level is low, it will probably return to normal by itself. Neurologists usually monitor WBC counts much more often following a low WBC count.

Liver Function Tests

- Since the liver plays an important role in immunity, patients with MS should have their liver function tested regularly.
- Liver function tests are usually done on the same schedule as WBC counts: 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and then yearly.
- If a patient's liver function test is high, it will probably return to normal by itself. Neurologists usually monitor liver function much more closely following a high liver function test.

Thyroid Levels

- Your body uses thyroid hormone to regulate energy levels. Thyroid hormone levels are often low in patients with MS. Therefore, patients taking Avonex should have their thyroid level monitored regularly. Thyroid levels are often measured at yearly checkups.
- If your thyroid function is low, your T4 level will be low, but your TSH level will be high.
- Ask your neurologist or a pharmacist at Diplomat Specialty Pharmacy if you have any questions about your thyroid level tests.

For questions or concerns regarding any of the above statements or recommendations, please feel free to contact Diplomat Specialty Pharmacy Toll Free at 1.866.208.3430.