

## Overview

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a disease that affects many parts of the body. Because of this, patients living with MS undergo many laboratory tests. These tests usually occur more frequently at the start of disease-modifying therapy and become less frequent as treatment continues. Since laboratory tests can be very confusing, Diplomat Specialty Pharmacy has prepared the following summary for 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 maintain a healthy immune system to prevent against invaders such as viruses and bacteria, 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 often returns to normal by itself. Neurologists usually monitor WBC counts much more often following a low WBC count result.

### Liver Function Tests

- Since the liver plays an important role in many bodily functions, patients with MS should have their liver function tested regularly.
- Liver function tests are usually measured at 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and then yearly (similar to WBC count schedule).
- If a patient's liver function test is high, it often returns to normal by itself and can be due to a variety of causes. Neurologists usually monitor liver function much more closely following a high liver function test result.

### Thyroid Levels

- Your body uses thyroid hormone to regulate energy levels and other processes. Thyroid hormone levels are often low in patients with MS. Therefore, patients taking Avonex should have their thyroid level monitored regularly, particularly in those with a history of thyroid problems. Thyroid levels are often measured at yearly checkups.
- 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.**