

# CONSENT FOR OPTIONAL BLOOD TESTING

Annual blood testing is no longer routinely provided by the Fitness-For-Life program for participants under the age of 50. For the reasons that are described below, blood testing is only done routinely at ages 25, 30, 35, 40, 42, 44, 46, and 48.

Per your MOU, you have the option to request blood testing today. However, we ask that you read and consider the concerns below. Your signed acknowledgment of these concerns is required before any blood testing can be performed.

Blood testing consists of four separate test panels. You may decide to have any combination or none of these panels after considering the following:

Lipid (Cholesterol) Panel: Lipid testing is done to estimate your risk of developing heart disease or stroke within the next ten years. This test is generally recommended every 4-6 years starting in your 20's. Testing more often may make sense if you have had high numbers in the past and are trying to lower them without medication. Otherwise, testing more often is an unnecessary needle stick and a waste of money.

I still want a Lipid Panel today.  No thanks

Diabetes Test (A1c): The American Diabetes Association (ADA) generally does not recommend screening for diabetes until age 45 (with repeat testing at age 48), unless you have a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more (see chart below). If so, the ADA recommends screening for diabetes every 3-5 years regardless of your age. Testing more often is an unnecessary needle stick and a waste of money.

Height (inches)	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78
Weight (lbs) at BMI=30	191	197	203	209	215	221	227	233	240	246	253	260

I still want a Diabetes Test (A1c) today.  No thanks

Blood Chemistry Panel: The primary purpose of a "chem panel" is to detect liver and kidney disease. No national health organization recommends routine testing for these diseases unless you are at high risk.

For liver disease, the most common risk factors in younger firefighters would be obesity (BMI of 30 or more), use of anabolic steroids, use of body building or weight loss supplements, or excessive alcohol intake. If any of these risk factors apply to you, testing may make sense if early liver disease would persuade you to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

For kidney disease, the most common risk factors in younger firefighters would be poorly controlled high blood pressure or poorly controlled diabetes. If either of these applies to you, testing may make sense if early kidney disease would persuade you to better manage these conditions.

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The down side in getting a chem panel is that it is not uncommon for results to be abnormal just by chance. This can occur because the panel measures 20 different “blood chemistries” Each one of these can vary day-by-day and person-to-person even when no disease is present. If you are young and healthy, the vast majority of abnormal results are meaningless and nothing to worry about. However, if you are told that your testing is abnormal, you will likely want to get repeat blood testing. This will require that you see your own doctor (repeat testing is not included in the Fitness-for-Life program). If repeat testing is still abnormal, more invasive testing such as CT or MRI scans may be recommended. These tests can involve more investment of your time, may be uncomfortable to undergo (MRI) or increase your long-term risk of cancer due to radiation (CT scans). If a scan is abnormal or possibly abnormal, your doctor may recommend having a biopsy done. As more tests are done, the chance of finding more incidental and meaningless abnormal results increases. This can lead to more tests and even unnecessary surgery. This can add up to a lot of anxiety, inconvenience, and sometimes direct injury or harm.

I still want a Blood Chemistry Panel today.                       No thanks

Complete Blood Count: This test can detect anemia, blood clotting disorders, and blood cancer. However, except for anemia in women, conditions detected by this test are extremely rare in persons under the age of 50. Therefore, no national health organization recommends doing a routine blood count unless you have symptoms that could be related to a blood disease.

The risks in getting this test are the same as getting a chem panel (see above). Minor abnormal results that do not affect your health are not uncommon. Yet, evaluating these to give you “peace of mind” can result in test after test and potential harm.

I still want a Complete Blood Count today.                       No thanks

I understand that my test results will be stored by the clinic for at least seven years, and will be provided to me or a designated health care provider upon request. The results will not be sent to C.E.O. Occupational Health Programs unless I have a concurrent DMV, HAZMAT, or SCUBA exam today.

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Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

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Date