

Pathology Guide for General Practice: CRP Testing

Clinical Situation	Recommendation	Source
Situations where the measurement of CRP may be of value	<p>Not every inflammatory illness requires a CRP measurement, and CRP should only be requested if the clinical picture is unclear and the result will contribute to patient management.</p> <p>The half-life of CRP is a matter of hours, so a falling level is evidence of resolution of disease.</p>	Association for Clinical Biochemistry (2012)
	<p>Measurement of CRP may be of value:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in differentiating possible acute infection from inflammation e.g. in patients predisposed to both, such as lupus of rheumatoid arthritis; - in helping to differentiate inflammatory from non-inflammatory bowel disease and irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory arthritis and osteoarthritis. 	Consultant Clinical Biochemist, St George's Hospital (2014)
	<p>The sensitivity of CRP measurements for the detection of disease varies greatly by disease:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - good for acute infection and inflammatory arthritis - intermediate for inflammatory bowel disease - poor for early malignancy 	
Situations where the ESR is more useful than CRP	<p>Situations when the ESR is more useful than CRP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the evaluation of a patient with unexplained symptoms of a deterioration of health status when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o a chronic inflammatory, neoplastic or infectious disease is suspected, o a specific diagnosis has not been made by other means; - monitoring the activity of temporal arteritis and polymyalgia rheumatic; - diagnosing (and occasionally monitoring) inflammatory arthritis and connective tissue disease. <p>There is no evidence to support the use of ESR in asymptomatic individuals</p>	

These recommendations represent best practice in the consensus of opinion of the authors and reviewers. The authors have used all reasonable care in compiling the information but make no warranty as to its accuracy. These recommendations were developed by Wandsworth CCG with SWL Pathology and adapted for use in Croydon.