



# Understanding Your Child's Complete Blood Count (CBC)

## *Pediatric Patient Education*

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### **What Is a CBC?**

A Complete Blood Count (CBC) is a common blood test that gives important information about your child's overall health. It looks at different types of cells in the blood and can help identify infections, anemia, inflammation, and other medical conditions.

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### **Red Blood Cells (RBCs)**

#### **What they do:**

Carry oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body.

#### **CBC measurements include:**

- **RBC (Red Blood Cell Count):** Number of red blood cells
- **Hemoglobin (Hgb):** Oxygen-carrying protein in red blood cells
- **Hematocrit (Hct):** Percentage of blood made up of red blood cells

#### **Why it matters:**

Low levels may suggest anemia. High levels can be seen with dehydration or other conditions.

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### **Red Blood Cell Indices**

**These measurements describe the size and shape of red blood cells and help determine the type of anemia, if present.**

- **MCV:** Average size of red blood cells
  - **MCH / MCHC:** Amount and concentration of hemoglobin
  - **RDW:** Variation in red blood cell size
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### **White Blood Cells (WBCs)**

**What they do:** Help the body fight infection.

- **Total WBC Count:** Overall number of white blood cells

**Why it matters:** High levels may suggest infection or inflammation. Low levels can occur with certain viral illnesses or other conditions.

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## White Blood Cell Differential

This section shows the different types of white blood cells:

Cell Type	Main Role
Neutrophils	Fight bacterial infections
Lymphocytes	Fight viral infections and support immunity
Monocytes	Help clean up infection and inflammation
Eosinophils	Often involved in allergies and asthma
Basophils	Play a role in allergic responses

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## Platelets

**What they do:** Help blood clot and stop bleeding.

- **Platelet Count: Number of platelets in the blood**

**Why it matters:** Low levels may increase bruising or bleeding. High levels can occur with inflammation or infection.

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## Important Things for Parents to Know

- **Normal CBC values vary by age- sometimes values are flagged as abnormal that really are normal for a child's age!**
  - **A single abnormal value does not always mean a serious problem**
  - **Results are interpreted along with symptoms, exam, and medical history**
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## When Should I Worry?

**Your pediatric provider will review the results and contact you if concerns are present.** Sometimes no treatment is needed, and sometimes follow-up testing may be recommended.

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## Questions?

If you have concerns about your child's CBC results, please contact our office.