GREATENERGY
Keys For Extraordinary Living

Functional Wellness Lab Wish List

What to ask your doctor for — and why it matters

by Daniela Hess, Autoimmune & Functional Wellness Consultant

IMPORTANT: Educational Resource Only — Not Medical Advice

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This is a wish list — a starting point for advocating for yourself in the doctor's office. Not every marker here will be right for every person, and your doctor or specialist is the appropriate person to determine what to order and how to interpret your results. Use this list as an educational tool to open that conversation.

1 THYROID PANEL

- TSH
- Free T3
- Free T4
- Total T3
- Total T4
- Reverse T3
- TPO Antibodies (thyroid peroxidase)
- Thyroglobulin Antibodies

Your thyroid is your body's master metabolic regulator. TSH alone is not enough to see the full picture.

Free T3 and Free T4 show how much active hormone is actually available to your cells. Total T3 and Total T4 give your doctor the broader hormone pool.

Reverse T3 can indicate whether your body is converting thyroid hormone properly or potentially blocking it under conditions of stress — something worth discussing with your provider.

TPO and Thyroglobulin Antibodies are markers that can reveal whether the immune system may be involved with the thyroid — this can be present for years before a clinical diagnosis is made. Knowing about it early creates more options for you and your healthcare team.

2 IRON PANEL

- Serum Iron
- Ferritin
- TIBC (Total Iron Binding Capacity)
- Iron Saturation

Iron does far more than prevent anemia. It is essential for energy production, thyroid function, and brain health.

Ferritin is your storage form and one of the first markers to drop when iron is low — even when a basic blood count looks normal. This is why the full panel is worth requesting.

TIBC and Iron Saturation give your doctor a clearer picture of how well your body is transporting and using the iron it has. All four markers together tell a more complete story than any single number alone.

3 SEX HORMONES

- Estradiol (E2)
- Estrone (E1)
- Progesterone
- Total Testosterone
- Free Testosterone
- DHEA-S
- DHT (dihydrotestosterone)
- FSH (follicle stimulating hormone)
- LH (luteinizing hormone)
- SHBG (sex hormone binding globulin)

Hormones do not work in isolation. Estradiol and Estrone together give a more complete estrogen picture than one number alone.

Progesterone balances estrogen and supports sleep, mood, and nervous system regulation.

Testosterone and Free Testosterone are relevant for energy, libido, strength, and mental clarity in women as much as in men. DHT is the more potent androgen form and relevant for hair, skin, and other androgen-driven concerns.

DHEA-S reflects adrenal reserve and overall hormonal resilience. FSH and LH tell your doctor where you are in your hormonal cycle or transition. SHBG tells your provider how much of your hormone is free and potentially active versus bound and unavailable to your cells.

4 METABOLIC AND BLOOD SUGAR

- Fasting Glucose
- Fasting Insulin

Blood sugar and insulin together give your doctor a clearer picture of how your body is managing energy and metabolic stress.

Fasting glucose alone can look normal while insulin is already elevated. Requesting both markers together is worth the conversation with your provider — it’s an earlier data point that many standard panels don’t include.

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5 ADRENAL AND CORTISOL

- Morning Cortisol — serum blood draw (collected before 9 AM)

OR

- Four-point salivary cortisol test (optional, but more comprehensive)

Cortisol is your primary stress hormone and follows a strong daily rhythm. A single morning blood draw gives a useful snapshot and is the standard option available through most doctors and labs including Labcorp and Quest. Collect it before 9 AM for accurate results.

A more comprehensive option is the four-point salivary cortisol test, which measures cortisol at morning, midday, afternoon, and evening. This is done at home with a kit (no blood draw required) and is available through functional medicine labs such as DUTCH, ZRT, and Labcorp's Sanesco panel. Ask your doctor if they can order it, or work with a functional medicine practitioner to access it. If a blood draw is your only option, that is still valuable data.

6 VITAMINS AND MINERALS

- Vitamin D (25-OH)
- B12
- Folate
- B6
- Magnesium RBC (not serum)
- Copper
- Selenium
- Zinc
- Iodine (spot urine or serum)

These nutrients are the raw materials your body uses to run every system on this list.

Vitamin D functions more like a hormone than a vitamin and affects immunity, mood, and thyroid function.

B12, Folate, and B6 are essential for methylation — the process your body uses to detoxify, make neurotransmitters, and regulate gene expression.

Magnesium RBC: Always request the RBC (red blood cell) form specifically. Serum magnesium can appear normal even when cellular levels are low — they measure different things. Your doctor can clarify this when ordering.

Copper, Selenium, and Zinc are important cofactors for thyroid conversion, immune function, and antioxidant defense. Iodine is a building block of thyroid hormone, and low levels are more common than is often recognized.

7 GENERAL (FOUNDATIONAL PANELS)

- CBC (Complete Blood Count)
- CMP (Comprehensive Metabolic Panel)

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- hs-CRP (High-Sensitivity C-Reactive Protein)
- Homocysteine

These are the foundation and a good starting point for any comprehensive lab visit.

CBC gives a picture of blood cells, immune activity, and basic red blood cell health. CMP covers kidney function, liver function, electrolytes, and blood sugar in one panel.

hs-CRP is a more sensitive marker of inflammation than the standard CRP. Low-grade chronic inflammation can go undetected on a standard CRP — worth asking your doctor about the high-sensitivity version.

Homocysteine is a marker your doctor can use to assess methylation efficiency and cardiovascular risk. It is often absent from standard panels but straightforward to add.

Each item on this list provides valuable data, and I encourage you to advocate for the full panel.
Some of these markers are easy for doctors to order and some require more conversation — and that conversation is worth having. A complete picture is always more valuable than a partial one. You do not need to present this as a demand list. You can simply ask: "I've been reading about functional lab testing. Would you be open to ordering a few additional markers?"

Lab Preparation & Timing — General Guidelines

Note: *The guidance below is general and educational. Always follow the specific instructions given by your ordering physician, lab, or pharmacist — especially regarding medication timing. If you are unsure, call your doctor's office before your appointment.*

Fasting: For the most accurate results, all labs on this list should ideally be done fasting — nothing to eat or drink except water for at least 10 to 12 hours before your draw.

Thyroid medication and evening/afternoon doses: If your prescribing physician has approved this approach, the general guidance in functional medicine is to take your dose the day before labs, ideally 12 to 16 hours before your appointment. **Always confirm this with your prescribing physician first.**

Morning medications: If you take thyroid medication or other relevant medications in the morning, your doctor may advise holding that dose until after your blood has been drawn. **Confirm with your prescribing physician.**

Morning cortisol blood draw: Must be collected before 9 AM. A draw later in the morning will not reflect your true morning cortisol level.

Four-point salivary cortisol test: Follow the timing instructions that come with your kit. Typically the first collection happens immediately upon waking, before eating, drinking, or brushing your teeth. The kit will guide you through the remaining three collections across the day.

Warmly,

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