

Medical Minute

MEDICAL TEST RESULTS



One of the *many* things about our health-care system that is so irritating is waiting forever for medical test results! OK, I get that there is **A LOT (billions)** of testing being done every year—simple blood work, urine tests, CT and MRI scans, x-rays, biopsies, and more. And it's not surprising that labs can get backed up, and only so many MRIs, x-rays, and other tests can be analyzed in a day. But I want it now!!! Apparently, I have the patience of a toddler in the candy aisle. So here are some tips to help get those results a little more promptly.

- **Online Reporting**—Most medical laboratories report their findings to doctors electronically, and if you use the internet, they can send the same results to you. Same with a hospital or medical center. Look for labs, hospitals, etc. that will report directly to you via the internet or their own portal. Also make sure to tell your Dr. to give them permission to report the results to you. I hate those portals, but maybe that's just me. One word: passwords. Actually, two words: forgot password.
- If you can't get results electronically, then when you are getting the test, ask the technician when your doctor should expect the results. Call your doctor on that day and ask what the results are. If by some chance they haven't got them in the office yet, call again the next day. In other words, make a pest out of yourself. Politely, of course—think determined mosquitoes, not swarm.
- If possible, have your test done early in the week and early in the day. Weekends are when offices are closed or there is minimal staff, and good luck getting any results then. On a Friday afternoon, your lab work may as well pack a tiny suitcase and go on vacation.

Bottom line: Be persistent. No results? Call your Dr., the lab, or diagnostic center again and again if you are not hearing from them in a timely manner. I know you have heard about the squeaky wheel—well, be one. Not an obnoxious angry wheel, just one that refuses to roll quietly into the ditch.