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Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

Testing Update: Cessation of Red Blood Cell Magnesium testing at Canterbury Health Laboratories

November 2026

Canterbury Health Laboratories is committed to ensuring that our testing repertoire remains clinically relevant. We wish to advise that, **as of 1 December 2026, we will no longer be offering red blood cell (RBC) magnesium testing.**

This decision follows a review of the clinical utility of RBC magnesium measurement. **There is currently insufficient high-quality evidence to support RBC magnesium measurement** in preference to serum or plasma magnesium for the assessment of magnesium status.

For patients in whom a disorder of magnesium homeostasis is suspected, serum or plasma magnesium measurement is recommended.

From 1 December 2026, requests for RBC magnesium will be declined and an explanatory comment will be added to the request.

If you require further advice, please contact the laboratory (03 364 0300) and ask to speak to the duty chemical pathologist.