

Lab Request Form

Adapted from MedEd Third Year slides

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What is this question?

In this task, you're asked to request the most appropriate lab results based on the patient's presentation. This can be a daunting question, because there are lots of options on the request form and only a limited number of choices you can make. Often you will be asked to only choose a certain number of blood tests, and you must select the most important ones.

It is helpful to think about this form as a LAB request, rather than BLOOD request. This is because there are a few scenarios where you may need samples other than blood.

Step 1: Fill out patient details

It's important that you double check this after you've written all this information, and then check once again when you've finished the question.

All the information needed should be given in the question stem, or at the front of question booklet.

Particularly important pieces of information for this question include:

Step Two: Reason for Request

There is a limited amount of space in this box for your information, so you need to be careful about what it is that you're doing.

This is the information that is vital:

- Patient demographics (eg. 56 Year Old Male)
- Presenting complaint (5 days RUQ post-prandial stomach pain, fever)
- Any tests done already (ECG, Blood pressure, temperature)
- What the reason for the request is (?cholecystitis, rule out anaemia, methotrexate monitoring)

Even this may be too much information, so it might be worth writing your reason for request first at the bottom of the box, and see how much space you have left.

Step 3: Requesting the tests

There is a list of commonly requested tests depending on the situation in another guide.

However, before that it is important to remember a few things if you are stuck:

- Think about what it is that you'd like to know. Read the patient's information and think what you'd like to rule out, what you think could guide management, if there's any side effects to medications that the patient is either on already/may be started on.
- Risk scores for certain conditions can tell you what tests you may need to order: for example CURB-65 requires Urea (U+E's), TIMI requires Troponin etc.

- Not every test is a blood test. It's easy to get into the habit of calling this stationery a "blood request form" as the majority of lab requests will be bloods. However it's important not to forget that other specimen types exist (for example stool, urine, wound swabs, skin scraping, nail clipping).
- If you want to do a test that isn't on the list, you need to request it by writing it out in the same way that you request non-blood tests (things like eGFR, Vitamin D, TTg, EMA, IgA).

At this point it's important for you to go back and check your work.