

**QUESTION OF THE WEEK****Q:** Why is it a good idea to fast before lab work?

Whether one should fast before lab work depends upon the study being ordered. The common lab work fasting has the greatest impact on is blood glucose and triglycerides. Eating a short time before these labs are drawn can elevate their values and lead to a misdiagnosis of diabetes or high triglycerides as opposed to normally elevated levels after eating. Other studies, such as viral screening tests (such as HIV and hepatitis C), pregnancy tests and many others do not require fasting before they are drawn.

If fasting is required, you should fast for 12 hours before labs are drawn. It is fine to drink water, black coffee (no sweeteners) or plain tea (again no additives). Also be sure to continue to take your medication. If you have questions, please contact your doctor.

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