

Test Updates: HbA1c

HbA1c: Follow-up Actions for Potentially Spurious Results

Summary

Further to our clinical update of 16 October 2026, Pathlab has **confirmed the affected period as 29 September to 9 October 2026**, repaired the analyser and strengthened our checks. We are now following up all affected requests. **You may already have seen, or will see over the coming days, new comments, flagged as abnormal, on HbA1c results from this period.** This update explains what they mean and the recommended action.

What we have done

- **Affected period confirmed.** Analysis of the analyser data and our laboratory records has isolated the fault to samples tested on the affected analyser between 29 September and 9 October 2026, around 4,500 requests in total.
- **Analyser repaired.** The analyser was removed from service on 9 October, repaired by the supplier's service engineer, and returned to service on 12 October.
- **Recurrence prevented.** A new check has been added to daily maintenance that will detect this specific fault if it ever recurs. This fault had not previously been seen by the supplier's specialists we consulted.
- **Delta checks strengthened.** This issue was first picked up when a repeat result failed our delta check, which compares a patient's result with their recent results. These checks have been extended to make them more sensitive, and results that flag are repeated to confirm. A flag will also alert us and the analyser supplier that intervention may be required.

What you will see in your inbox

Affected requests have been split into two groups according to clinical risk. Both comments below are flagged as abnormal so that they are noticed in your inbox. The flag does not mean the HbA1c result itself is abnormal.

1. Higher-risk group: result withdrawn and recollect arranged by Pathlab (344 requests)

On 22 October 2026 we withdrew the HbA1c result on the following requests and replaced it with a comment: antenatal requests; immigration medical requests with HbA1c above 41 mmol/mol; patients under 18 with no previous HbA1c in our system; HbA1c above 48 mmol/mol with no previous HbA1c in our system; and results that moved between the normal and diabetes ranges (in either direction) compared with the previous result.

The comment reads:

Due to a temporary analyser issue, there is a small (2%) chance that the reported HbA1c is inaccurate. As a precaution, HbA1c testing should be repeated. Pathlab will contact the client to arrange a recollect.

Pathlab will contact these patients directly, and the request form will be ready when they attend. The new result will be reported to the original requester. Please do not act on the withdrawn result in the meantime.

2. Lower-risk group: precautionary comment added (4,128 requests)

On the **morning of Wednesday 28 October 2026** we will add the following comment to all remaining HbA1c results tested on the affected analyser during the affected period. The original result remains on the report. **These comments will be released in bulk, so expect them to arrive in your inbox together that morning.**

Due to a temporary analyser issue, there is a small (2%) chance that the reported HbA1c is inaccurate. As a precaution, recommend reviewing clinical status and repeating HbA1c if warranted.

For these patients, please review the result against their history and clinical picture, and request a repeat HbA1c if it is unexpected or would change management. As before, repeat testing is free of charge where payment would usually apply.

Practice lists

On **Tuesday 27 October 2026**, ahead of the bulk comments, we will email the practices with the largest number of affected requests a spreadsheet listing their affected patients, the requesting clinician, affected result, risk category and reason for that classification, and the suggested action (as above). This lets you check the comments in your inbox against an expected list and plan any review if you wish.

Further information

If you have concerns about a patient's HbA1c result or wish to discuss the need for repeat testing, please contact Pathlab via our online contact form, including the patient NHI and/or Pathlab request number.

Pathlab again sincerely apologises for this situation and the effect it has on our patients, and thanks the clinicians who have worked with us on this.

Dr Stephen du Toit: Chemical Pathologist
Dr Tim Sutton: General Pathologist for Biochemistry
Andrew Soepnel: Service Lead, Biochemistry