

MELISSA PEARSON COACHING | CONSULTING

Take the Wheel of Your Health

Stop guessing. Get answers.
Start feeling like yourself again.

THE GUIDE

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Take the Wheel of Your Health

For everyone who's tired of not feeling well, tired of guessing, and tired of getting nowhere with their health.

Stop guessing. Get answers. Start feeling like yourself again.

What this is:

A system for becoming the steward of your own health: getting the information you need to move forward, and learning about the full toolbox available to you so you can reach for the right tool at the right time. Your doctor is one of those tools. Not the whole toolbox.

Please read this first:

This guide shares my personal experience and my own education. It is not medical advice. I'm not a doctor, dietitian, or licensed health professional. Everything here is what I did, what I used, and what I learned along the way and is not intended to treat, cure or diagnose. Always work with your healthcare provider, especially before adjusting medications, starting new programs and supplements, or acting on anything in this guide.

Before We Start

I need to tell you how I ended up writing this, because I have a feeling you may be able to relate in some way.

I have battled my weight my entire life. By the time I reached my highest weight, I was dealing with autoimmune disease, diabetes, fibromyalgia, PCOS/PMOS, chronic inflammation & pain, an energy level that barely got me through the day and my sleep was so bad. I have tried more diets and programs than I can count. I have restricted and deprived and white-knuckled my way through so many plans ... plans that were never built for real life. I have released 70, 80 pounds at a time and felt that rush of hope that this time was going to be different but it never was.

Every single time, the weight came back. And it brought friends. More pounds than I started with. More shame. More proof that maybe I just wasn't someone who could do this (by the way, that was a lie). It added to my health conditions each time too.

In 2019, I had released 80 pounds. I was doing it again but then I took a break over the summer... and the break carried into the fall... and then Covid hit. And during Covid, I did what so many of us did. I lived in my stretchy pants, cooked new recipes, ate, and completely neglected the journey I had been on. Then when the world opened back up, I poured myself into a huge work project and neglected myself all over again.

That was the real pattern. Not laziness, not lack of willpower but neglect. Putting everything and everyone ahead of myself, over and over, like it was my job. And if you're reading this, I'd bet money you know that pattern personally. It is so interesting how quickly we can abandon ourselves isn't it?

Here is what I know now and have figured out and it changed everything: you can do both. You can put yourself first AND show up for the people and things you love. In fact, putting yourself first is exactly what makes you better for all of it. That's not selfish. That's stewardship... a word I've come to know, deeply respect, and practise.

Stewardship means taking care of something valuable that's been placed in your hands, because you're the one responsible for it.

Doesn't that definition just stir something inside you? It sure does for me and we are all so valuable. Your body is the one thing that's been entirely entrusted to you. Nobody else lives in it, nobody else feels what it feels, and nobody else, not even a good doctor, is responsible for looking after it the way you are. A steward doesn't neglect the thing in their care while tending to everything else. And a steward doesn't hand the responsibility off and hope, either. They stay informed, ask questions, use their advisors well, and make the decisions. Being the steward of your own health simply means this: your body is in your care, and you're the one who decides how well it's looked after.

This guide is the practical half of that stewardship: how to actually take the wheel of your own health, get real information about your own body, and stop waiting for someone else to care about your health as much as you do. Because I learned the hard way that nobody is coming to save you or your health and that is actually the most empowering thing I ever realized.

Let's get into it.

Melissa

Part 1: The Shift That Changes Everything

Most of my life I assumed someone else...my doctor, the system, etc. was responsible for my health, and would advocate for me the way I would for myself and that left me feeling frustrated. I'd walk in with a problem and walk out with a prescription, and it didn't always feel good to me. Often we were never looking for the why. But in hindsight, much of my frustration came from my own unrealistic expectations, because the truth is, I was the one responsible for my health, not anyone else. A doctor is there to advise me and bring their expertise. It was never on them to know my body, keep track of what was going on day to day, and drive the whole thing. That part was always mine. Once I got honest about what a doctor's role is, and what I needed to do myself, everything changed and the one thing I know for certain is nobody is going to lead my health the way I will. Same goes for you.

Something else dissolved the frustration too. When you see a medical professional and present a problem, the system they work within mostly offers solutions from two shelves: tests and prescriptions, or referrals to specialists and/or surgery. That's the lane. While some doctors genuinely care deeply, some are more transactional, but regardless their lane is their lane. Getting to the why, the real root of what's happening, was never going to come from one ten-minute appointment. It's a process. It takes my doctor's input as my advisor, and it takes me doing my part too, tracking what's going on, following up, and speaking up for what I need along the way. Expecting all of that to happen in a single visit was never realistic. And realizing that wasn't defeat. It was freedom.

Because here's the thing you have to understand:

Your doctor is your advisor. Not your owner, and not the person in charge of your health. You are!

An advisor is valuable and sometimes essential. You bring them good information, you ask good questions, you take their expertise seriously, and then YOU remain the project manager of your own body. You live in it. You have all the data they'll never see: how you sleep, how you feel at 3pm, what changed after what.

Here is the thing many don't realize your body will do a remarkable amount for you if it's properly supported ... and proper support begins with you, not with outsourcing it.

Your Health Toolbox

Here's the bigger picture that changed how I operate. Most of us were taught one move: something's wrong, go to the doctor. While your doctor is an important tool in your toolbox ... they are one tool in a big toolbox that you have access to every single day:

<i>The Tool</i>	<i>What it looks like</i>
Nutrition	The most-used tool in the box, whether you're using it well or not. This includes weight loss plans and healthy lifestyle programs but you want the ones built for real life, not the fad diets. If you need a recommendation, I've got a great healthy lifestyle plan that I have been following and it is free. Message me on Facebook or Instagram, or reply to any of my emails and I can share it with you.
Exercise and movement	At home on your own, with a trainer, a gym membership, classes... pick things that you enjoy doing and focus on the results you will feel after vs actually doing the thing.
Sleep	The recovery tool every other tool depends on. People drastically underestimate the importance of getting quality sleep and the brutal effects it alone can have on your health.
Stress management and nervous system care	Calming the system so your body can actually heal and function. Breath work, meditation, etc. This is so important.
Hydration	Simple, free, & constantly underestimated.
Supplementation	The right supplementation, targeted to what your body actually needs, can be one of the most impactful and most overlooked tools in your health journey.

Your Doctor and Medical Team	Family doctors, walk-in clinics, nurse practitioners, specialists, virtual care, Pharmacists. Valuable tools to be used as the advisors they are.
Functional Medicine / Naturopathic Support	Practitioners whose lane is digging into root causes.
Registered Dietitian or Nutritionist	Professional guidance for the nutrition tool.
Body Work & Hands On Care	Chiropractic care, acupuncture, massage, and physiotherapy for the physical body: movement, pain, tension, injury, and recovery.
Testing and Tracking	Your labs, your symptoms, your numbers over time. So important.
Education	Books, reputable sources, and AI (<i>used wisely</i>).
Community, Support & Accountability	The people walking with you. It is important to surround yourself with like minded people who value growth and change. This will definitely help you in your journey.
Surgery	Surgery or a recommended procedure, when it's the right path for you.
Medications	Medications, when they're the right support for your situation.
Mental Health/Emotional & Mindset/Personal Growth Support	Therapy, counselling and/or coaching. These can be some of the best gifts you give yourself.
Mindset	The tool that decides whether you use any of the others. That's why this system includes a whole section on it.

When you see the whole toolbox, you realize how many options you actually have. One door closing doesn't mean you're out of options, it means you reach for another tool.

One more thing. When you truly make this shift ... accepting that YOU are the one in charge of your health and seeing the whole toolbox instead of one door, it saves you from something else: chasing the quick fixes, the shiny objects, and the 30-day miracles.

Stewardship means doing the right work, for a long enough period of time, to see results. It may sound less exciting, but it's the thing that actually works. And what it helps you build is sustainable results that you can manage for the long term, not the temporary ones from a start-stop cycle that almost always fuels the shame-and-blame spiral.

Part 2: You Can't Navigate Without a Map

Here's a conversation I have constantly. Someone tells me they're exhausted, or their weight won't move, or their hormones feel like chaos, or they can't think straight by mid-afternoon. And when I ask when they last had bloodwork done, the answer is either years ago or sometimes never, beyond the bare minimum.

So they're chasing solutions for energy, weight, hormones, sleep, mood, and focus with no idea where anything actually stands. Something as unglamorous as low vitamin D, low iron stores, a B12 problem, or a thyroid that's drifted can produce serious, life-dulling symptoms. But without the numbers, you're guessing... trying to solve a problem you haven't even identified yet and you can't fix what you haven't found.

It's like taking a trip to a place you've never been, with no map. You don't get there. You get lost, and then frustrated, and then you decide the destination must be impossible and you give up. That's what I watch happen to people with their health, and it breaks my heart. It's not because they're broken, they're not. It's because they're navigating blind and missing out on answers and results that were within reach the whole time and that they deserve to have.

Your baseline is your map. Before you change anything, spend a dollar on anything, or believe anyone's theory about what's wrong with you, find out where you actually are. Let me show you why this matters, with a story about me ... A while back, social media became absolutely saturated with cortisol talk. Your cortisol is tanked, your cortisol is why you're tired, your cortisol is why the weight won't move, and here's a supplement for it. I heard it enough times that I started thinking ... Hmm maybe that's my problem too? But instead of buying into that theory, I got my labs done. Guess what? My cortisol was fine. Completely fine but the internet had me halfway convinced about a problem I didn't even have. Meanwhile, the thing that actually showed up in my bloodwork was something nobody on social media was talking about... and it turned out to be the key to a plateau that had me stuck for six months. That whole story is coming in Part 5 but the point of the story ... **Test. Don't guess.**

And before anyone hears any of this as a knock on supplements, let me be crystal clear, because it's the opposite. I am a huge believer in supplementation. It's what I've used to manage my psoriatic arthritis and my fibromyalgia, and it's been a big part of improving my A1C, my sleep, my immunity, my migraines and more. I genuinely think it's one of the best tools we have for our health. But here's the key: the right supplements for you are the ones YOUR body actually needs, and you won't know what those are without finding out what's actually going on. That's the whole point of the cortisol story. Testing isn't the alternative to supplementation. Testing is how you supplement well.

Part 3: Figuring Out Which Labs To Talk About

So how do you know what to ask about? There are two paths, and this system gives you both. Use whichever fits you, or both together.

PATH ONE: Let AI Help You Prepare (*this is what I did*).

I opened ChatGPT (an AI tool) and told it three things in detail: my current medical conditions, my current symptoms and struggles, and what I was trying to improve. Then I asked what lab tests would be appropriate for me to look into and discuss with my doctor. It gave me a personalized starting list I could bring to my appointment. Then, and this part matters, I fact-checked what it told me against reputable sources like the Mayo Clinic before I trusted any of it. It all held up and continues to. The exact prompts I used, plus a getting-started walkthrough if you've never touched ChatGPT, are in your AI Prompts Pack to get you started.

PATH TWO: The Lab Discussion Guide (*no AI needed*).

At the end of this guide is a reference section: the common lab tests, what each one checks, and why it might be worth discussing, organized by category and by symptom. Read through it, mark the ones that match what you're experiencing, and bring your marked-up list to your appointment as a discussion guide with your health professional.

Either way, hear this clearly: **this is a conversation guide, not a shopping list.** Not everyone needs every test. Here's the partnership as I see it: your doctor brings the medical expertise, the training, and the knowledge to interpret what's going on and you bring something just as essential: your history, your symptoms, how you actually feel day to day, and a knowledge of your body that no chart will ever hold. You live in it. You know it in ways they can't.

Part 4: The Appointment (Where Most People Drop the Ball)

Most people lose the game right here. Not because their provider isn't capable, but because they walk in unprepared, get nervous, forget half of what they wanted to say, and walk out with nothing. Preparation is the entire difference, and it's exactly what prepared patients get out of the same seven to ten minutes that unprepared patients don't.

No Family Doctor? This Still Works.

Everything in this part works with any health professional: your family doctor if you have one, a walk-in clinic, a nurse practitioner, or a virtual care appointment. The approach doesn't change. One thing actually matters MORE when the provider doesn't know you: your preparation becomes your continuity. A walk-in doctor has no history with you, so the one-page summary you bring IS your history. You carry the file. That's not a disadvantage ... again that's you being the steward, and in fact, prepared patients get better results.

A Note on Coverage and Cost.

Depending on where you live, labs ordered by a health professional may be covered by your government health plan, Medicare, or insurance, so for many people this costs nothing but the effort of asking. If that's not your situation, or coverage and access are a barrier for you, know that private-pay and direct-to-consumer lab options exist in most places. And if paying out of pocket makes you hesitate, ask yourself the question I'd ask you across a table: what is your health worth? Money spent finding out what's actually going on in your body is some of the best money you will ever spend. It saves you from staying stuck, and it saves you from spending far more on guesses, products, and plans that were never your actual problem in the first place. It helps you prevent big problems and issues developing down the road. It isn't an expense either, it is an investment in yourself and your health to purchase the map you need.

Before You Go to Your Appointment:

Write down your top three concerns and the one question you refuse to leave without answering. Bring your symptom notes, your lab discussion list and your health summary if you are seeing someone new. (The Appointment Checklist in this system walks you through all of it, and it's printable and will help set you up for a great appointment.)

How to Open the Conversation.

Here's what worked for me, nearly word for word: "I'm really serious about improving my health. I've been doing a lot of work on it, and I need to know where things actually stand so I know where to focus. I'd like to talk about getting a baseline set of labs. Based on what I've been experiencing, I've put together a list of the ones I'd like to discuss having done." That framing matters. You're not challenging anyone. You're demonstrating that you're an engaged patient, and most doctors genuinely respond well to that. Mine did. She ran the whole panel without a moment of pushback.

If You Get Resistance Anyway.

Some people do, and you should be ready rather than crushed. Stay warm, and use these, in this order:

"Can you help me understand why it wouldn't be appropriate to check this, given my symptoms?" (a genuine question, and sometimes the answer is a good one)

"Is there another way you'd recommend investigating these symptoms?" (this one often opens a better door than the one you knocked on)

"What would need to change for this test to make sense later?" (now you have a marker to come back to, instead of a dead end)

"Okay. Could you note in my chart that I requested this test and it was declined?" (calm, polite, and it changes the energy of the conversation more often than you'd believe, because it makes the decision a documented one. Save this one for when the others haven't landed.)

And If the Answer is Still No?

You're not out of options. Ask what they WOULD suggest for your symptoms, because sometimes the no comes with a better door. Seek a second opinion or a different provider... a walk-in, a nurse practitioner, or virtual care if necessary. Look into private-pay lab options where they exist. And remember your toolbox: one declined test isn't the end and a no from one advisor is information, not the end of the road.

The Supplement Conversation.

People ask me constantly: do you think I can take this supplement with my medication, with my condition, with my numbers? And my answer is always the same: I can't give you that advice, because I'm not a medical professional, but here's exactly what I tell them to do instead, and it's yours now too.

Print off the information sheet about the supplement, bring it to your appointment, and say: "I've been reading about this supplement as a more natural way of supporting [what it's for]. I'm really trying to improve my health and I'd like to take a more natural approach where it's safe and I am able to. Given my medications and my situation, is this something I could try?" Now your doctor is doing exactly what they're best positioned to do: checking safety and interactions for YOUR body. That's the advisor relationship working the way it should. Pharmacists are also great people to ask about what is safe to take with your medications as they are the experts in drug interactions.

Always, always get copies of your results.

They're yours. You're building a file on your own body, and it starts here.

Part 5: When the Door Closes Anyway

I want to tell you about the appointment that stung for me because you may have one of these in your past, or one in your future, and I need you to know what to do with it.

Last year I hit a six-month weight plateau. Six months of losing and gaining the same 5 to 7 pounds. It was brutal. But, the one thing that kept me from abandoning myself, and I think this is so important to share, is that throughout my whole health journey this time, I have focused on how I FEEL instead of on the weight, and I've let the weight release be a byproduct of what I was doing. That made ALL the difference. Because even though the plateau frustrated me, I still FELT great, and that FEELING is what kept me in the game.

During that stretch, I also did the AI-and-labs process this guide teaches, and one number jumped out: my estradiol was 40. At the time, I was on a very low-estrogen birth control pill. My family doctor looked at the number with me, agreed it was low for me given my situation and my medication, and offered options. We adjusted to a pill with more estrogen. A few weeks later, my estradiol came back up and my weight started releasing again, after six months of being stalled. That was the only change I made.

And here's the kicker ... That whole time, I had been imagining it was something big and metabolic... insulin resistance, my whole system, gosh knows what else. It was none of that. It was one simple lab value out of whack. This is exactly why I'm teaching you these things. They are crucial on your journey.

In the meantime, I'd been referred to a specialist (an Endocrinologist) because of the plateau. So I sat across from her and walked her through all of it: the plateau, the low estradiol number, the change in the medication and the result and she dismissed the whole thing. She told me they don't use hormones for weight management. She told me I had lost all the weight I was going to be able to lose and offered me exactly one thing: a GLP-1. Now, I'm not knocking GLP-1s. For some people, with the right support, they're a useful tool. I emphasize TOOL, because I see many use them as a solution vs a tool and that is a very slippery slope. I've supported too many people who were handed the tool (GLP-1) with no support and couldn't maintain it. More importantly: I had just lived the evidence of what was actually going on in my own body, and I was being told it didn't count.

Here's the part that hurt my heart though and it wasn't about me. I'm strong-willed. I heard "you're done losing weight" and thought: this doctor is so wrong, and if this door is closing, I'll find another one. I'm relentless like that. But I sat in my car afterward thinking about how many people would have received that exact sentence and believed it. Accepted it, gone home, and quietly given up on themselves or taken the only thing offered, without the proper support to make it work.

So let me say to you what I wish someone had been saying to them:

You do not have to accept every conclusion you're given. A doctor's opinion is information, and while usually good information, it is not a verdict on your body's future.

Lastly, you are allowed to seek a second opinion. You are allowed to keep asking. You know your body better than anyone who has spent ten minutes or a few short appointments with it, and there are moments when the most important thing you can do is turn inward, listen to your own gut, and trust what you know to actually be true. A closed door might be a closed door but that has never once meant there are no other doors to open. Remember, you have a whole toolbox at your disposal for your health.

Part 6: After the Appointment

Your results come back. Here's how to handle them ... like a project manager instead of a patient:

Read your results as questions to bring back, not conclusions to draw alone. AI can help here too: the Prompts Pack includes a prompt that you can use to get it to explain your lab report in plain language and, more importantly, generates the questions worth asking your doctor about them.

Also know that "normal" doesn't always mean "optimal." A result inside the reference range can still be worth a conversation if it doesn't match how you feel. (My estradiol story lives right here.)

Labs get interpreted together, not in isolation, and always alongside your symptoms. One number seldom tells a whole story, which is another reason your doctor is a necessary partner in reading them.

Track your numbers over time. A simple note on your phone works: date, test, result, range. Your trend line will eventually tell you more than any single result, and you'll walk into every future appointment holding your own history.

And then, do the right work, for long enough, and retest. That's the loop. Baseline, focus, support your body, measure again. It might seem unglamorous, but it's highly effective, it's yours, it will serve you far better and guide you to more sustainable results than the start/stop or give up games ever will.

A Last Word

You are the steward of your own health. Not because doctors don't matter (they do, and part of this guide is really about working with them better), but because nobody else lives in your body, and nobody else ever will.

And this ...

Somewhere along the way, we normalized feeling crappy.

Tired became normal.

Foggy became normal.

Running on empty for everyone else became something to joke about.

But the truth is, it is not normal, none of it and it doesn't have to be that way.

And deciding it won't be for you can start today, with one appointment and one page of questions.

Take the wheel. I'll be cheering for you the whole way. And here's some good news: because this system found its way to you, you're already on my email list, which along with my social media, is where I share the honest version of my story, the tips, and the tools I'm using as I keep transforming my own life. At the time of creating this, I have released 150 lbs naturally, my diabetes no longer exists, and I have minimal symptoms from my current health conditions. I manage them with supplementation rather than medication, which was the right path for me. Best of all, I FEEL amazing! I am doing things I never thought I could and life is so much better and easier.

Your body, your history, and your path are your own, and I'd never tell you what yours should look like. But I tell you this not to impress you but to impress upon you that change is possible, even after years of nothing working or finding yourself in poor health. I see people every day in tougher circumstances than I was and they're doing it too. Let that inspire and fuel you.

It's also where I show up as a coach, because that's the other half of what I do... helping people realize their potential, build their belief and confidence, break through the barriers holding them back, and make their minds work FOR them instead of against them. If the mindset piece in this system stirred something in you, that's the work I live in. Watch your inbox ... my best stuff lands there.

I hope you take action on this because I know it will serve you well and you so deserve that and to feel your absolute best!

Melissa

The Lab Discussion Guide: Know Your Numbers

This is not a checklist of tests everyone should ask for. Testing decisions depend on your symptoms, your history, your medications, your age, and your risk factors, and your provider's judgment matters. More testing is not automatically better.

Use this as a discussion guide, not a shopping list. Identify the ones that match your symptoms or situation, bring the list to your appointment, and let your provider interpret everything in context.

General Health and Organ Function

Test	What it checks	Why it may be worth discussing
CBC (Complete Blood Count)	Red cells, white cells, platelets	Anemia, infection, inflammation, immune health
CMP (Comprehensive Metabolic Panel)	Kidney, liver, electrolytes, glucose	General health, medication safety, organ function
Electrolytes (Na, K, Cl, CO2)	Mineral balance	Fatigue, muscle cramps, hydration
Creatinine and eGFR	Kidney function	Medication safety, kidney health
Liver enzymes (ALT, AST, ALP, GGT)	Liver health	Fatigue, medication monitoring, fatty liver
Calcium	Bone, nerve, muscle function	Vitamin D and parathyroid questions
Magnesium	Muscle and nerve function	Fatigue, cramps, sleep, migraines (blood levels don't always reflect total body stores)

Blood Sugar and Metabolic Health

<i>Test</i>	<i>What it checks</i>	<i>Why it may be worth discussing</i>
Fasting glucose	Blood sugar	Diabetes screening
Hemoglobin A1C	Average blood sugar over about 3 months	Diabetes and prediabetes
Fasting insulin	Insulin production	Insulin resistance (especially relevant with PCOS/PMOS, weight struggles, metabolic syndrome)

Thyroid Health

<i>Test</i>	<i>What it checks</i>	<i>Why it may be worth discussing</i>
TSH	The brain's signal to the thyroid	First-line thyroid screening
Free T4	Active thyroid hormone	Assessing thyroid function
Free T3	Active thyroid hormone	Sometimes useful when symptoms persist
TPO antibodies	Autoimmune thyroid disease	Hashimoto's screening
Thyroglobulin antibodies	Autoimmune thyroid disease	Often checked alongside TPO

Iron and Anemia

<i>Test</i>	<i>What it checks</i>	<i>Why it may be worth discussing</i>
Ferritin	Iron stores	Fatigue, hair loss, restless legs
Iron and TIBC/transferrin saturation	Iron level and transport	Interpreting iron status properly
Vitamin B12	Nerve health, red blood cells	Fatigue, numbness, brain fog
Folate	Red blood cells	Fatigue, anemia

Inflammation and Autoimmune Health

<i>Test</i>	<i>What it checks</i>	<i>Why it may be worth discussing</i>
CRP	General inflammation	Autoimmune activity, infection
ESR	Chronic inflammation	Autoimmune disease
ANA	Autoimmune screening	Lupus and connective tissue conditions
Rheumatoid factor and Anti-CCP	Rheumatoid arthritis markers	Joint pain
Uric acid	Gout risk	Joint pain

Heart and Cardiovascular Health

<i>Test</i>	<i>What it checks</i>	<i>Why it may be worth discussing</i>
Lipid panel	Cholesterol and triglycerides	Heart disease risk
ApoB (if available)	Atherogenic particles	More detailed cardiovascular risk
Lipoprotein(a)	Inherited cardiovascular risk	Often checked once in adulthood

Hormones: Women

<i>Test</i>	<i>What it checks</i>	<i>Why it may be worth discussing</i>
Estradiol	Estrogen	Perimenopause and menopause symptoms, cycle questions
Progesterone	Ovulation	Cycle evaluation (timing matters)
FSH and LH	Ovarian function and ovulation signals	Menopause assessment, PCOS/PMOS (less reliable on hormonal birth control)
Testosterone (total and free), DHEA-S, SHBG	Androgens and hormone transport	PCOS/PMOS, hair loss, low libido
Prolactin	Pituitary hormone	Irregular periods, fertility questions
Cortisol (AM)	Stress hormone	Fatigue and adrenal questions (ordered selectively, and worth actually testing before believing the internet about it)

Hormones: Men

<i>Test</i>	<i>What it checks</i>	<i>Why it may be worth discussing</i>
Testosterone (total and free)	Primary male androgen	Low energy, low libido, muscle loss, mood changes, sleep issues
SHBG	Hormone transport	Helps interpret testosterone results properly
LH and FSH	The brain's signals to the testes	Helps identify where a low testosterone issue originates
Estradiol	Estrogen (men have it too)	Hormone balance questions, especially alongside testosterone concerns
DHEA-S	Adrenal androgen	Energy and adrenal questions
Prolactin	Pituitary hormone	Low libido, low testosterone follow-up
Cortisol (AM)	Stress hormone	Fatigue and adrenal questions (ordered selectively)
PSA	Prostate-specific antigen (not a hormone, but often part of men's health discussions)	Prostate screening conversation, depending on age and risk factors

Vitamins and Nutrition

<i>Test</i>	<i>What it checks</i>	<i>Why it may be worth discussing</i>
Vitamin D	Bone, immune, muscle health	Fatigue, bone health, autoimmune support
B vitamins	Energy production, nerve health, red blood cells	B12 and folate are the commonly tested ones (listed under Iron and anemia); levels out of range can cause fatigue, brain fog, mood changes, and nerve symptoms. Other B levels are checked in selected cases
Zinc, copper (selected cases)	Immune function, nutrient balance	Hair loss, wound healing, rare deficiencies

Suggestions By Symptom: Where To Start the Conversation

Fatigue: CBC, ferritin, iron studies, B12, folate, vitamin D, TSH, free T4, CMP, fasting glucose or A1C. Ask whether a sleep assessment makes sense.

Weight release resistance / metabolic health: A1C, fasting glucose, fasting insulin, lipid panel, TSH, free T4, and where appropriate estradiol, testosterone, cortisol only when clinically indicated.

Hair loss: ferritin, TSH, vitamin D, B12, zinc, testosterone, DHEA-S.

Joint pain: CRP, ESR, ANA, rheumatoid factor, anti-CCP, uric acid, CBC.

PCOS/PMOS: fasting insulin, A1C, lipid panel, testosterone (total and free), SHBG, DHEA-S, LH/FSH where appropriate.

Low energy, low libido, or mood changes (men): testosterone (total and free), SHBG, LH/FSH, TSH, CBC, vitamin D, fasting glucose or A1C.

Perimenopause / menopause: a symptoms-based discussion is often more useful than hormone levels alone, because levels fluctuate and are hard to interpret, especially on hormonal birth control. Your provider may consider estradiol, FSH, and others depending on your situation.

Four Things To Remember

1. Normal doesn't always mean optimal.
2. Labs get interpreted together, not in isolation.
3. Symptoms matter as much as numbers. Keep track of yours and bring them to your health professional, because they are important information.
4. Reference ranges differ between laboratories, so your provider interprets them in context.