EDIBLE *Earth*

A WOMEN'S WELLNESS EDUCATION GUIDE

Your Functional Health Testing *Guide*

unlocking your empowered glow through diagnostics

A plain-English look at the health tests available to women in Australia — what each one checks, where to get it, and what Medicare may cover. Designed to help you have a more informed conversation with your GP, to empower yourself with the right knowledge, terms, and maintain autonomy over your body, your health and your treatment choices, because repairing and regulating the body holistically, often doesn't require a script or injection. Prevention is the cure.

For education only · Not medical advice · Always work with a qualified practitioner

START HERE

How to use this *guide*

This guide gathers the tests often discussed in women's and functional health into one easy place — covering hormones, metabolism, gut health, inflammation, nutrients and more. It's here to help you understand what's *available* and to ask better questions, not to diagnose or to tell you which tests you personally need.

The golden rule

Learn how to work with your GP to obtain the right diagnostic tools to gain more understanding on what's happening inside your unique biology, as no two bodies are the same. The aim is to pinpoint the root causes of your symptoms, so you can adequately address them in a way that aligns with you and your individual needs, and learn how to further prevent them.

How to read each table

- **The test** — the name your doctor will recognise (with common abbreviations).
- **What it looks at** — in everyday language, and why someone might consider it.
- **Where to get it** — through a GP, a specialist, or a private/practitioner-only lab.
- **Medicare** — the rebate status and the MBS item number that applies.

Your key to the labels

Medicare rebate commonly rebatable when ordered by a GP.

With criteria rebate only if clinical rules are met.

Usually private typically out-of-pocket / not on Medicare.

GP **Specialist** **Practitioner-only** = where it's ordered. Each test also shows its **MBS item number** where one applies.

A note on "functional ranges"

Some integrative practitioners read results against narrower "functional" ranges rather than the standard lab ranges, aiming to spot patterns earlier. It's a useful lens — but it's an interpretive approach, not an agreed medical standard, and tighter ranges can flag "problems" that aren't clinically significant. Ask what a result means for *you*, and how it compares to the standard range.

Understanding your Medicare items

Each test lists its MBS (Medicare Benefits Schedule) item number where one applies — these are the items you can be rebated for as a Medicare-eligible patient. Two things to know: many items are only rebated when specific clinical criteria are met, and "coning" rules can cap how many Medicare pays for when several tests are ordered together. Your GP applies the correct item on the request form. Tests marked **"No MBS item"** are private.

1 Hormones & cycle health

For PCOS · fertility · endometriosis · perimenopause & menopause · PMDD

THE TEST	WHAT IT LOOKS AT & WHY	WHERE	MEDICARE
Oestradiol	A main form of oestrogen. Helps assess cycle health, ovulation and the perimenopause transition. **Timing matters:** *often taken Day 3 (baseline) of your cycle.*	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66695 series*
Progesterone	Confirms whether ovulation has occurred and supports investigation of cycle and luteal-phase issues. **Timing:** *usually Day 21 (or ~7 days after ovulation).*	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66695 series*
FSH & LH Follicle-stimulating & luteinising hormone	Pituitary hormones that drive the cycle. Useful for ovulation, PCOS patterns and assessing the menopause transition. **Timing:** *typically Day 3.*	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66695 series*
Testosterone	An androgen relevant to PCOS, energy, libido and skin/hair changes when raised or low.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66695 series*
DHEA-S Dehydroepiandrosterone sulphate	An adrenal androgen sometimes checked alongside testosterone in PCOS and androgen-excess work-ups.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66695 series*
SHBG Sex hormone-binding globulin	Shows how much sex hormone is "free" and active. Often low in PCOS/insulin resistance.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66695 series*
AMH Anti-Müllerian hormone	A marker of ovarian reserve (the pool of remaining eggs), often used in fertility planning.	GP Specialist	Usually private No MBS item

** Reproductive hormones share the MBS hormone-quantitation series (item 66695 and up), billed by the number of hormones tested in one request.*

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Thyroid & stress hormones

For energy, metabolism, mood, cycle changes and autoimmune screening

THE TEST	WHAT IT LOOKS AT & WHY	WHERE	MEDICARE
TSH Thyroid-stimulating hormone	The first-line thyroid screen. A normal TSH usually means the thyroid is working as expected.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66716
Full thyroid panel TSH, Free T4, Free T3	A fuller picture of thyroid function, including the active hormones T4 and T3. **With criteria:** *Free T4/T3 are rebated when TSH is abnormal, when monitoring thyroid disease, or when investigating amenorrhoea/infertility.*	GP	With criteria MBS 66719
Thyroid antibodies TPO antibodies	Checks for autoimmune thyroid conditions such as Hashimoto's, a common cause of thyroid problems in women.	GP	With criteria MBS 71165–71168
Morning cortisol (blood)	The standard test if a genuine adrenal hormone problem (too high or too low) is suspected.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66695 series
Salivary cortisol ×4 Diurnal/daily rhythm	Saliva collected across the day to map the cortisol rhythm — a private, practitioner-ordered test used by some practitioners to explore stress patterns.	Practitioner-only	Usually private No MBS item

3 Metabolic & blood sugar

For insulin sensitivity, diabetes risk and energy — key in PCOS & weight management

THE TEST	WHAT IT LOOKS AT & WHY	WHERE	MEDICARE
Fasting glucose	Blood sugar after fasting — a basic screen for blood-sugar regulation.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66500–66512
Glucose tolerance test GTT / OGTT	Tracks how your body handles a glucose drink over time. Used in diabetes and PCOS assessment, and in pregnancy.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66542
HbA1c Glycated haemoglobin	Your average blood sugar over ~3 months. Helpful for diabetes risk and monitoring. **With criteria:** *frequency limits apply (screening vs diagnosed diabetes differ).*	GP	With criteria MBS 66551 / 66841
Lipid profile Cholesterol, HDL, LDL, triglycerides	Your blood fats — part of metabolic and heart-health assessment.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66536
Liver function LFTs — ALT, AST, ALP	How the liver is performing — relevant to metabolism, medication and general health.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66500–66512
Kidney function EUC — electrolytes, urea, creatinine	Checks kidney function and fluid/salt balance.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66500–66512

4 Inflammation & immune health

For low-grade inflammation and immune/autoimmune screening

THE TEST	WHAT IT LOOKS AT & WHY	WHERE	MEDICARE
Full blood count CBC, with differential	Red cells, white cells and platelets — a broad snapshot of immune health, infection and anaemia.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 65070
CRP C-reactive protein	A standard marker of inflammation in the body.	GP	Medicare rebate GP applies item
hs-CRP High-sensitivity CRP	A more sensitive version, sometimes used to pick up lower-level inflammation and in heart-risk assessment.	GP	Medicare rebate GP applies item
Ferritin	Iron storage — but it also rises with inflammation, so it's read in context.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66593
Homocysteine	An amino acid linked to both cardiovascular risk and B-vitamin/methylation status.	GP	With criteria GP applies item
ANA Antinuclear antibody	A screening test for autoimmune conditions. A positive result needs careful, specialist interpretation.	GP	Medicare rebate GP applies item

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Iron, B-vitamins & nutrients

For energy, mood and cellular function — including methylation markers

THE TEST	WHAT IT LOOKS AT & WHY	WHERE	MEDICARE
Iron studies Ferritin, transferrin, TIBC, saturation	A full picture of iron status — common to check given iron loss through menstruation.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66596
Vitamin B12 Total	Important for energy, nerves and red blood cells. **With criteria:** *generally rebatable once in a 12-month period.*	GP	With criteria MBS 66838
Folate Serum / red cell	A B-vitamin essential for cell division — especially relevant in preconception and pregnancy.	GP	With criteria MBS 66838
Vitamin D	Supports bones, immunity and mood. **With criteria:** *rebate applies when specific risk factors are documented (3 tests / 12 months).*	GP	With criteria MBS 66833
Homocysteine	A key methylation marker (how well your body uses B-vitamins for detox, mood and repair).	GP	With criteria GP applies item
Methylmalonic acid MMA	Used to confirm a functional B12 deficiency when the standard B12 result is borderline or unclear. **With criteria:** *generally only when B12 is inconclusive or abnormal.*	GP	With criteria MBS 66839

The methylation idea, in plain terms

"Methylation" is a set of everyday chemical reactions your body uses to make energy, calm the nervous system, build DNA and clear out waste — powered largely by B-vitamins. Functional practitioners often interpret markers like homocysteine and B12 against tighter targets than standard ranges. As always, ask what a result means for you before starting any supplement protocol.

6 Gut & bowel health

For digestion, the microbiome and bowel inflammation

THE TEST	WHAT IT LOOKS AT & WHY	WHERE	MEDICARE
Faecal MC&S Microscopy, culture & sensitivity	The standard stool test for bacterial and parasitic gut infections.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 69345 / 69336 / 69339
Faecal calprotectin	Detects inflammation in the bowel — helps distinguish IBS from inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). **With criteria:** *e.g. patient under 50, symptoms over 6 weeks, infectious causes excluded.*	GP	With criteria MBS 66522 / 66523 / 66525
GI-MAP Stool DNA microbiome panel	A comprehensive private panel for bacteria, parasites and fungi (e.g. Candida), used in functional medicine.	Practitioner-only	Usually private No MBS item

7 Pathogens, parasites & fungal

For gut bugs, parasites (Giardia), candida & fungal, hidden infections and environmental exposures

THE TEST	WHAT IT LOOKS AT & WHY	WHERE	MEDICARE
Faecal OCP Ova, cysts & parasites	Microscopy of a stool sample for intestinal parasites and worms — including Giardia cysts, Blastocystis and Dientamoeba.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 69336 / 69339
Faecal multiplex PCR Enteric pathogen panel	A sensitive DNA test that screens one stool sample for many gut pathogens at once — Giardia, Cryptosporidium, Entamoeba, plus bacterial causes like Salmonella and Campylobacter.	GP	Medicare rebate GP applies item
Giardia & Cryptosporidium Antigen / PCR	A targeted stool test for two of the most common waterborne parasites behind ongoing diarrhoea, bloating and fatigue.	GP	Medicare rebate GP applies item
Helicobacter pylori Breath test / faecal antigen	Checks for the stomach bacterium linked to reflux, ulcers and B12/iron issues. Non-invasive, via a breath test or a stool antigen test.	GP	Medicare rebate GP applies item
Faecal candida & fungal culture	Stool culture for Candida and other yeasts/fungi. *Comprehensive private panels (e.g. GI-MAP, see* **Gut & bowel health***) also quantify Candida, parasites and dysbiosis in one test.*	GP Practitioner-only	Medicare rebate GP applies item
EBV serology Epstein-Barr virus	Looks for past or reactivated glandular-fever infection.	GP	Medicare rebate GP applies item
Lyme disease serology	Antibody testing for Borrelia. Discuss interpretation with a doctor experienced in this area.	Specialist	Usually private No MBS item
Mycotoxin (urine) Mould exposure	A private test used to assess mould/mycotoxin exposure, ordered through an integrative practitioner.	Practitioner-only	Usually private No MBS item

8 Reproductive & urinary

For cervical screening, vaginal & urinary health and ovarian reserve

THE TEST	WHAT IT LOOKS AT & WHY	WHERE	MEDICARE
Cervical screening test replaced the Pap smear	Screens for HPV and cervical cell changes — part of routine women's preventive health.	GP	Medicare rebate GP applies item
Vaginal swab & culture	Identifies the cause of recurrent thrush, BV or other infections so treatment can be targeted.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 69300 / 69303
Urinalysis dipstick	A quick first-line urine check for infection, blood, glucose and protein.	GP	Medicare rebate GP applies item
Urine culture	Confirms a urinary tract infection and which antibiotic will work. **With criteria:** *eligibility rules apply.*	GP	With criteria MBS 69333
AMH & hormone panel	For ovarian reserve and a fuller reproductive-hormone picture (see *Hormones & cycle health*).	GP Specialist	AMH private Panel: MBS 66695 series

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Heart health

For cardiovascular risk — beyond cholesterol alone

THE TEST	WHAT IT LOOKS AT & WHY	WHERE	MEDICARE
Lipid profile	Total cholesterol, HDL, LDL and triglycerides — the core cardiovascular screen.	GP	Medicare rebate MBS 66536
hs-CRP	Low-level inflammation, sometimes added to refine heart-risk assessment.	GP	Medicare rebate GP applies item
Homocysteine	An independent cardiovascular risk marker that also reflects B-vitamin status.	GP	With criteria GP applies item
BNP / NT-proBNP	Helps rule heart failure in or out when there are relevant symptoms. **With criteria:** *rebate applies in specific clinical situations.*	GP Specialist	With criteria MBS 66829 / 66585 / 66586

Specialty & functional panels at a glance

Beyond the above, integrative practitioners also offer urine hormone-metabolite panels, the Organic Acids Test (OAT) and dried blood-spot hormone testing. These are private, practitioner-ordered tests, interpreted as part of a personalised, root-cause approach to your health.

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

How to access testing *in Australia*

1. **Start with your GP.** They can order all the standard pathology tests in this guide and will choose the correct Medicare item. Bring your symptoms, cycle history and any family history to the appointment.
2. **Consider an integrative or functional practitioner** for the specialty panels (saliva/urine hormones, GI-MAP, OAT, mycotoxin). These are ordered privately — ask about cost and what the result will tell you.
3. **Direct-to-consumer labs** exist for some panels, but an AHPRA-registered doctor must authorise the referral, and you'll still want professional help interpreting results.
4. **Check Medicare and private cover first.** Ask whether you meet the rebate criteria, and check whether your private health policy covers any functional testing.

Helpful questions to ask your doctor

> "Based on my symptoms, which of these tests would actually change what we do next?"

> "Will this be Medicare-rebatable for me, or is there an out-of-pocket cost?"

> "Is there an ideal day in my cycle to run the hormone tests?"

> "Will you read my results against standard ranges, functional ranges, or both — and what does that mean for me?"

> "If something comes back borderline, what's the plan before we start any treatment?"

Important — please read

This guide is for general education only and is **not medical advice, diagnosis or treatment**. It doesn't replace a consultation with a qualified, AHPRA-registered healthcare professional. The availability and Medicare rebate status of tests can change and always depend on your individual clinical circumstances — confirm current details with your doctor or pathology provider. Never start, stop or change any treatment or medication based on a test result without professional guidance. Edible Earth is a wellness brand, not a medical or pathology provider, and provides this guide as a starting point for conversation with your own practitioner.

With love, and to your health,

SARAH & TEAM EARTH XOX

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