

# Sharing is Caring

The Cancer Center at Lowell General Hospital

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## Circle Health Patient Portal

The Circle Health Patient Portal is a secure online portal that gives you convenient access to your healthcare information, including hospital test results and medical records. It allows you to share that information with your healthcare providers, make updates to your personal information, access lab results and your active medication list and much more. You (or an authorized family member) are the only person who will have access your personal Circle Health Patient Portal.

In order to register, just stop by any of our Patient Service Centers with a photo ID. The enrollment process takes in less than five minutes. Shortly after your in-person enrollment, you will receive an email from Lowell General Hospital at [noreply@iqhealth.com](mailto:noreply@iqhealth.com). Simply click the link within the email and follow the onscreen instructions to finalize your enrollment.

After you enroll, you will be able to access your patient portal from anywhere that has internet service. You can find a direct link to the portal at [www.lowellgeneral.org/patientportal](http://www.lowellgeneral.org/patientportal).

We are proud to offer you this new patient resource. The Circle Health Patient Portal is one more way we are working to deliver on our promise of **Complete connected care** to you and our community.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q: What information is available on the Circle Health Patient Portal?

A: You will have access to a list of your current medications, immunizations and allergies as well as your discrete lab results, procedures, patient visit summaries and discharge instructions.

### Q: Is this portal different from the portal at my primary care physician's (PCP) office?

A: Yes, the Circle Health Patient Portal shows your health information for services you receive while you are at Lowell General. If your PCP also utilizes a patient portal, you should be able to see your hospital-specific results on both portals.

### Q: When will my results be posted to the patient portal?

A: All test and lab results will take 36 hours to be updated in the patient portal.

### Q: Are there any restrictions when signing up for the patient portal?

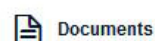
A: Patients must be at least 18 years old to enroll in the patient portal.

### Q: Who do I contact for technical support for the Circle Health Patient Portal?

A: Support is available anytime at 1-877-621-8014.

### Q: How do I access my medical records?

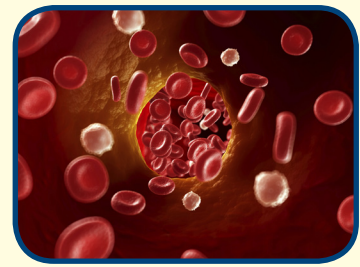
A: After you log in, click on the Health Record link at the top right of the home screen. You will then see various options on the left of the Health Record screen.



## Understanding Your Lab Values

By Katrina Parkhurst, RN, BSN, OCN

A complete blood count (CBC) is a measurement of your red blood cells (RBCs or hemoglobin and hematocrit, also called h&h); white blood cells or WBCs (help fight infection) and platelets (help your blood to clot).



A normal CBC is different for men and women, and in an oncology patient the normal count is expected to be even lower. Red blood cells carry oxygen throughout our bodies, and the hemoglobin also carries iron. Your body learns to adjust to lower counts, but when it is too low you may be weak, fatigued, dizzy, pale, cold and experience shortness of breath. A low hemoglobin and hematocrit is often referred to as anemia. Your CBC is monitored throughout your treatment as well as your symptoms. Both are taken into consideration when deciding any treatment that may be necessary. Often times the red blood cells will bounce back and may increase its count between treatments.

White blood cells help to fight infection and are an important value in proceeding with many treatments. In some disease states, the WBCs are too high and ineffective. In others, they may become low after treatment. Neutrophils are the “first responders” of the WBCs. They are the cells that appear at an infection first to start the fight against any foreign particles. An Absolute Neutrophil Count is a calculation of the total white blood cells and the number of neutrophils done by your practitioners to determine your body’s ability to handle your treatment and any possible infection. Some treatments may require an injection to keep the WBC count up because we know the treatment tends to lower them significantly.

Platelets are your body’s first defense in clotting. Both radiation and chemotherapy may lower your platelet count, and receiving concurrent therapy has a greater risk of lowering the platelet count. Your platelet count is monitored throughout your treatment. You may notice that you bruise easier even with a small bump. General precautions while on treatment should be followed such as using an electric razor and a soft toothbrush, avoiding commercial mouthwashes with alcohol, and keeping well hydrated. Do not take aspirin or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen, Aleve or Motrin without first consulting your practitioner.

Some treatments require monitoring of kidney function using Blood Urea Nitrogen (BUN) and Creatinine (CREA) measurements. BUN measures the amount of urea nitrogen in your blood. Urea is made when protein is broken down in the liver and excreted in urine. CREA is a waste product from the normal breakdown of muscle tissue that is filtered through the kidneys and excreted in the urine. The results of these tests let the practitioners know if the kidneys are properly excreting waste.

Other labs that may be drawn are tumor markers. Tumor markers are not for all disease states. They are not used as the sole criteria for diagnosis of a disease and often are used as an “eyeball” to see if a particular treatment seems to be working. With a rise in a tumor marker, it may be an indication that the practitioner needs to look into further testing for the particular patient; however, it is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and depends on many factors. Your practitioner can explain how we will monitor if your treatment is working and to what extent.

### References

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