

Improving Children's Health Through Better Pediatric Reference Intervals

What Are Pediatric Reference Intervals (PRIs)?

When a healthcare provider orders a blood test for a child, they compare the results to a "reference interval." This is a range of numbers that shows what's normal for a healthy child. These intervals help doctors decide if a child's test result is normal or if there's a problem that needs attention.

Why Are Accurate PRIs Important?

- Children are not just small adults. Their normal test values change as they grow.
- PRIs vary at different ages and developmental stages.
- Without accurate PRIs, doctors risk misdiagnosing conditions, potentially harming children.



- Pediatric laboratory professionals work to provide clinicians with accurate reference intervals to evaluate children's health effectively.
- Developing precise pediatric reference intervals is challenging due to the difficulty of collecting blood samples from healthy children.

The infrastructure for advancing this effort is already in place

- The CDC's congressional justification outlines that its Environmental Health Laboratory is prepared to launch and oversee this critical initiative with \$10 million in dedicated funding.

Congress has repeatedly recognized the need to improve PRIs in report language

FY25 Senate LHHS Committee Report:

Pediatric Reference Intervals.—The Committee encourages CDC to initiate efforts to improve the accuracy of pediatric reference intervals. CDC is directed to include an estimate of the costs associated with developing pediatric reference intervals in the fiscal year 2026 CJ.

FY25 House LHHS Committee Report:

Pediatric Reference Intervals.—The Committee supports CDC's work to ensure the reliable diagnosis and treatment of children in a cost-effective manner. A 2022 CDC study found that many reference intervals used for children do not accurately reflect the biology of child development. The Committee encourages CDC to develop pediatric reference intervals and directs the CDC to include information on the funding needed for this activity as part of the fiscal year 2026 congressional justification.

ADLM and its partners call on Congress to provide funding for this initiative

Partner Organizations

- Academy of Clinical Laboratory Physicians and Scientists
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Association of Nurse Practitioners
- American Clinical Laboratory Association
- American College of Clinical Pharmacy
- American Medical Technologists
- American Society of Andrology
- American Society for Bone and Mineral Research
- American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science
- American Society for Clinical Pathology
- American Society of Hematology
- American Society of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology
- American Urological Association
- ARUP Laboratories
- Association for Diagnostics & Laboratory Medicine
- Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
- Association of Pathology Chairs
- Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses
- Association of Public Health Laboratories
- Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
- Avalon Healthcare Solutions
- Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
- Children's Hospital Association
- Children's Hospital Colorado
- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- Children's National Hospital
- Children's Pathology Chiefs
- COLA, Inc.
- College of American Pathologists
- Endocrine Society
- International Society of Andrology
- Laboratory Corporation of America Holdings
- National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
- National Hispanic Medical Association
- National Rural Health Association
- PCOS Challenge: The National Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Association
- Pediatric Endocrine Society
- Quest Diagnostics
- Seattle Children's Hospital
- Siemens Healthineers
- Society for Reproductive Investigation
- Society for Pediatric Pathology
- University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Health System

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