BNP

What is BNP?

BNP (b-type or brain natriuretic peptide) is a hormone that your heart releases when it is enlarged or under stress. If your heart is healthy, then you will have very little BNP in your blood. If your heart is not healthy and has to work hard to pump blood, you may have a high level of BNP in your body.

What is a BNP test?

A BNP test is a simple blood test. Healthcare providers may order this test if they think you have heart failure. This test may be ordered in the emergency room if you come in with symptoms of heart problems. BNP tests may also be ordered by your regular healthcare provider to check on the health of your heart.

What can a BNP test tell your healthcare provider?

BNP test results can tell your healthcare provider whether or not you may have heart failure or if more tests are needed. Because BNP levels increase with worsening heart failure, it can be used to tell your healthcare provider how severe the heart failure may be. If you have already been diagnosed with heart failure, BNP may be used to help fine-tune your medications and other treatments.

Your BNP test may be high even if you do not have heart failure. If you have had a heart attack, have lung disease, kidney disease, or are on dialysis, your BNP levels may be increased. If you have symptoms of the diseases above or have been diagnosed with any of these conditions, your healthcare provider may order additional testing to rule out heart failure.

If your symptoms worsen suddenly, a BNP test may help your healthcare providers determine if it is due to worsening heart failure.

As with any medical test, be sure to ask your healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about the test itself or your test results.