VITALS VAULT

FREE GUIDE

RDW Detective Sheet

RDW shows how much your red blood cells vary in size. It is a clue, not a diagnosis. Use this sheet to see what else to look at and what to ask.

WHAT RDW IS

RDW measures how much red blood cells differ in size. It is a non-specific clue, and high values go with inflammation and with shortages of iron, B12 or folate.

IF RDW IS HIGH, ASK ABOUT

Look at	Why
Iron, B12 and folate	High-RDW anemias often reflect a shortage of one of these.
Inflammation (CRP)	A high RDW is considered a marker of inflammation.
Kidney and liver numbers	A high RDW also goes with impaired kidney function and liver problems.
The type of anemia	Anemia of chronic disease usually has a normal RDW.

LOG YOUR NUMBERS

Date	RDW %	Hemoglobin	Notes

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- [ ] Which red-cell numbers go with my RDW, such as hemoglobin and MCV?
- [ ] Should iron, B12 or folate be checked?
- [ ] Could inflammation explain it, and should CRP be checked?
- [ ] Has my RDW changed over time?

Sources: Jiang 2021 (5,115 adults 65 and older); Pan 2019. Associations only; RDW is non-specific and the lab range applies.

Educational only. Not medical advice, and not a diagnosis. Take this to your own clinician. vitalsvault.com