

Electrolytes:

These are your potassium, sodium, chloride and CO₂ levels.

- **Potassium** is controlled very carefully by the kidneys. It is important for the proper functioning of the nerves and muscles, particularly the heart. Any value outside the expected range – high or low – requires medical evaluation. This is especially important if you are taking a diuretic (water pill) or heart pill (Digitalis, Lanoxin, Digoxin, etc.).
- **Sodium** is also regulated by the kidneys and adrenal glands. The most common causes of low sodium are diuretic usage, diabetes drugs like chlorpropamide, and excessive water intake in patients with heart or liver disease.
- **CO₂** reflects the acid status of your blood. Low CO₂ levels can be due to increased acidity from uncontrolled diabetes, kidney disease, or metabolic disorders, or to chronic hyperventilation.