

Directorate of Laboratory Medicine:
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A short guide to requesting Zinc in primary care

- Zinc deficiency is uncommon in the UK except potentially in vegetarians, malabsorption, alcoholism, pregnancy or sickle cell anaemia.

- Symptoms of zinc deficiency are non-specific (hair loss, skin problems, anaemia, diarrhoea etc) but are unlikely to occur individually.

- Patients who have undergone bariatric surgery should have a full trace element profile measured annually unless there are specific signs of trace element deficiency that may require more frequent testing.

- **We do not recommend zinc analysis for any of the follow reasons:**
 - Burning mouth syndrome / persistent ulcers
 - Hair loss
 - Anaemia

This is due to:

- Poor evidence base for link to deficiency (Burning Mouth Syndrome)
- Poor evidence for efficacy of zinc supplementation (Hair Loss)
- Rare cause of condition (Anaemia)