My labs are perfect but I feel awful – what’s wrong with me?

Make your numbers mean something!

Do you keep hearing this from your doctor? “There’s no medical reason for you to feel bad. Your labs are perfect.” Even worse, are your doctors and family starting to think it’s all in your head? Are they recommending therapy or antidepressants and mood stabilizers?

I know what that’s like. I’ve had great lab results for 4½ years and felt lousy for 3½ years until I finally took control of my own care.

Here’s the thing – lab values are averages. They’re a range. A small change in one value might make a huge difference in how you feel and in your life where it might not affect anything for anyone else.

For me, it was potassium levels. I was completely wiped out after a session and desperate to get some quality of life back. My doctor told me to increase my potassium intake, so I did. I went from 2000 milligrams a day to 3000 milligrams a day. My potassium level jumped to near 4. I felt better but still felt wiped out at the end of a session.

It wasn’t until I could show him exactly how much potassium I was getting in my diet – AND commit to monitoring it regularly! – that he agreed to try a few more things that really made a difference in my life. Without the detailed reports I was able to hand him, he would not have tried changing me from 1K to 2K solution. And I would have continued to suffer.

Now I feel so much better that I can even help get dinner after I get off dialysis. I’d never have been able to do that before.

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