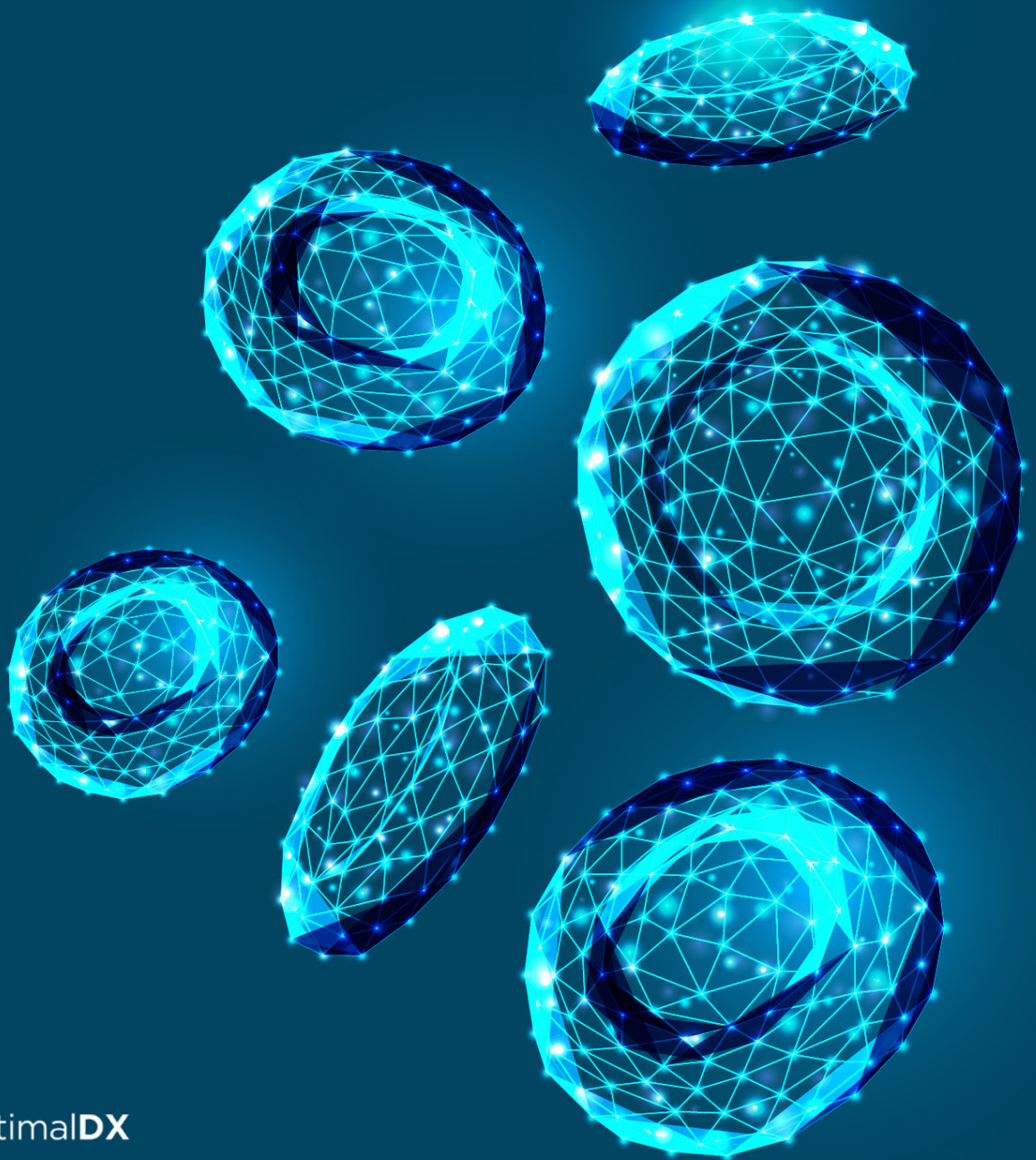


# THE FBCA BLUEPRINT:

## How to Implement FBCA into Your Clinic





# Introduction

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As a medical professional, Functional Medicine has always represented an avenue for you to deliver more value to your patients and continue to guide them on their journey toward optimal health.

Maybe you're just beginning to educate yourself on Functional Medicine or maybe you've had experience in this discipline previously.

In either case, you've decided to explore the role that blood chemistry analysis plays in a Functional Medicine practitioner's toolkit — now it's time to learn how to implement Functional Blood Chemistry Analysis (FBCA) into your practice.

[Learn more about OptimalDX >](#)



# What is FBCA and how does it fit into my practice?

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FBCA may seem like a diagnostic tool reserved for allopathic practitioners, but the reality is that it can be a powerful tool from a Functional Medicine perspective as well. Rather than diagnosing pathologies based off of abnormal biomarker levels, Functional Blood Chemistry Analysis can give us more precise insights into our patients' health.

There is a huge range of values that exist between abnormal blood biomarker levels and healthy levels — hidden within that range is valuable information about our patients' lifestyle, diet, metabolism and unique health needs.

Measuring these values enables us to evaluate trends and relationships and develop treatment plans that discourage or reinforce those trends and relationships. This process can help to elevate your practice and give your patients the best care possible.

# Limits of Liability & Disclaimer of Warranty

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We have designed this book to provide information regarding the subject matter covered. It is made available with the understanding that the authors/publishers are not liable for the misconception or misuse of information provided.

The purpose of this book is to educate. It is not meant to be a comprehensive source for the topic covered and is not intended as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment or intended as a substitute for medical counseling. Information contained in this book should not be construed as a claim or representation that any treatment, process or interpretation mentioned constitutes a cure, palliative, or ameliorative. The information covered is intended to supplement the practitioner's knowledge of their patient. It should be considered as adjunctive support to other diagnostic medical procedures.

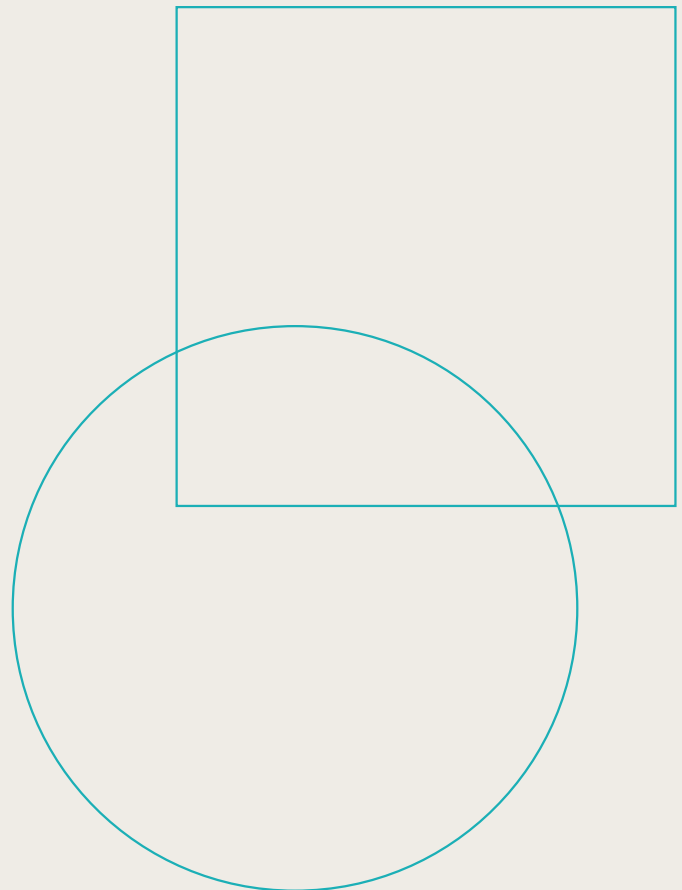
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# Table of Contents

Click any item below to jump to the section.

- 6** THE BENEFITS OF FBCA
- 8** FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS
- 12** HOW TO GET STARTED
- 14** RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPOINTMENTS
- 17** HOW TO SCALE YOUR PRACTICE
- 18** WHERE TO LEARN MORE
- 20** APPENDIX: FBCA FORMS



# What are the Benefits of FBCA?

For the patient, a practice with a well-implemented FBCA offering is a major differentiator. When the practitioner understands FBCA thoroughly and is equipped with the right systems and tools to carry it out effectively, patients can expect:

- 1.** Improved health outcomes, as their medical professional is focused on improving their overall health rather than merely preventing disease.
- 2.** Reduced costs, as FBCA can often enable an assessment of the underlying issue without additional expensive testing.
- 3.** Fewer tests when additional testing is needed, as FBCA significantly narrows down potential causes.
- 4.** A practitioner that not only understands their complaints, but can identify a path forward towards optimal health and wellness.

Through FBCA, you'll be able to **assess trends towards dysfunction and disease** and provide recommendations for your patients to avoid risk factors, adapt their lifestyle and/or seek further treatment. More specifically, FBCA will provide you with trends towards:

- Blood sugar dysregulation
- Cardiovascular disease
- Thyroid imbalance
- Adrenal irregularities
- Acid-base imbalances
- Gallbladder dysfunction
- Kidney dysfunction
- Liver dysfunction
- Allergies
- Heavy metals toxicity
- Gastrointestinal dysfunction
- Immune imbalance
- Oxidative stress
- Red blood cell dysfunction and anemia
- Inflammation
- Sex hormone irregularities

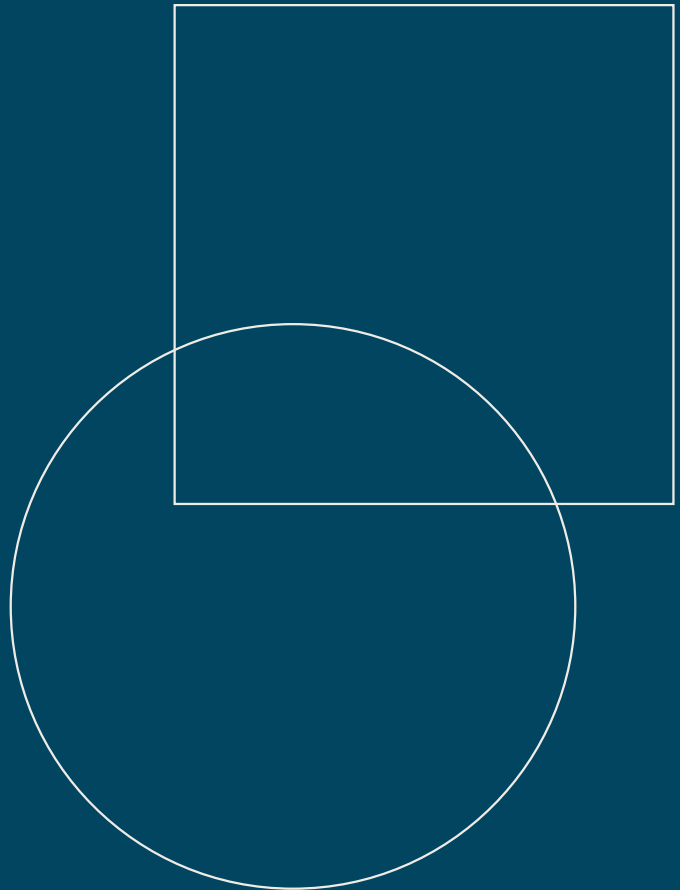


# ON GETTING FBCA RIGHT IN YOUR PRACTICE.

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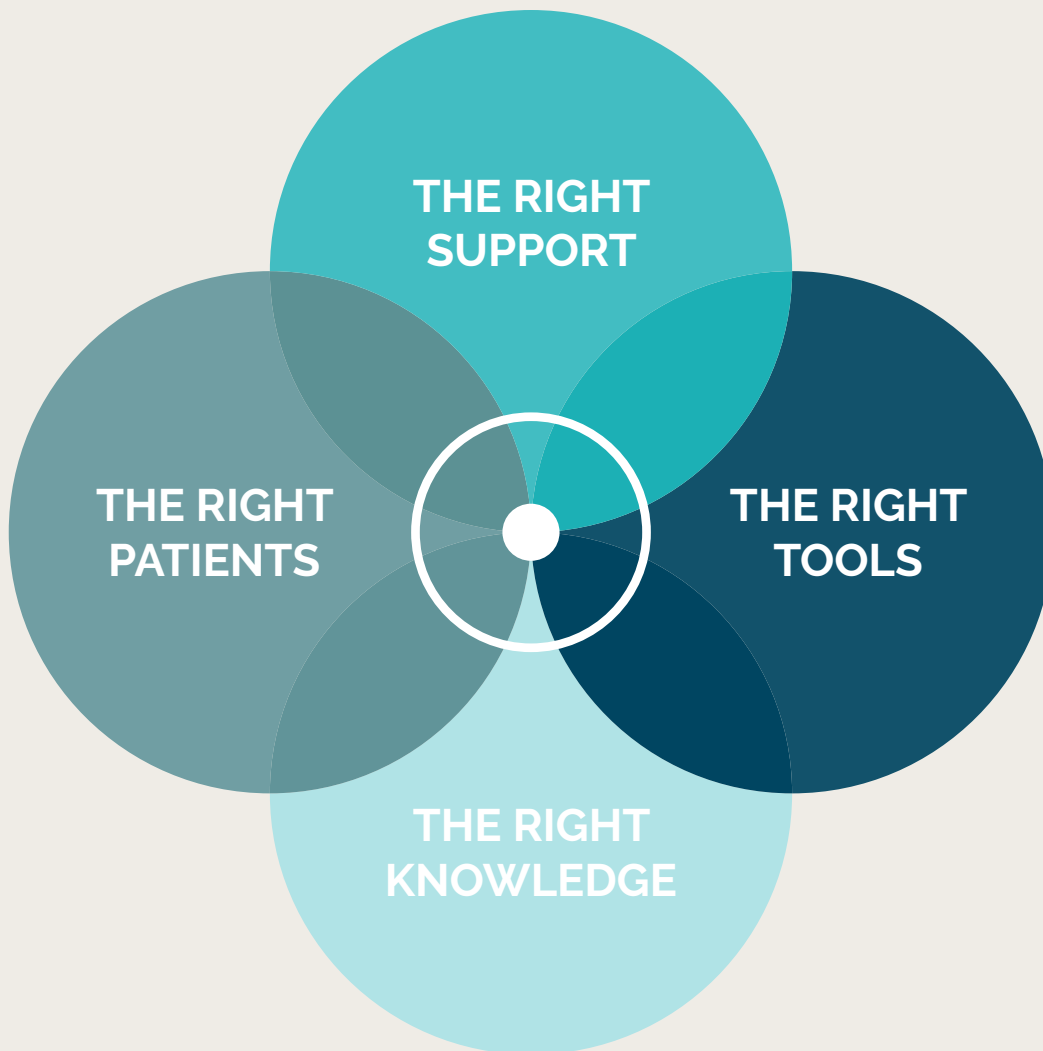
Your patients will be overjoyed to learn more about their health and how to prevent disease — but in order for FBCA to work in your practice, it must be clinically effective, easily implemented, have a high degree of patient compliance and be financially rewarding.

In this guide, we'll provide advice and instruction on how to best implement FBCA in your practice to ensure success.



# Foundational Elements of a FBCA Implementation

Before your FBCA implementation is up and running, you'll want to make sure you have four foundational elements in place, including:





## THE RIGHT SUPPORT

First, you'll need to select **a clinical laboratory to perform blood tests**, such as Quest Diagnostics, LabCorp or another laboratory. Regardless of the clinical laboratory you select to perform blood testing, you'll commonly receive a basic level of support from them. This includes:

- Setting up panels for you so that your most commonly ordered biomarkers are bundled together, such as a basic chemistry metabolic panel and complete blood count panel, male panel, female panel, cardiovascular risk panel, thyroid panel and so on.
- Performing additional testing upon request after an initial test. Generally, a lab will keep a given blood sample for several days after running an initial test in case the results suggest another test is needed.
- Status updates to inform you once your test results are available for download.

Next, you'll want to ensure that your front desk staff is trained and knowledgeable about the testing process. This will ensure that your patients understand all of their requirements beforehand and that you will be able to focus the bulk of their appointment **discussing medically valuable information rather than procedural elements**. What's more, your front desk staff can remind patients of follow-up visits and reinforce treatment plans to ensure patient compliance.

## THE RIGHT TOOLS

Even though your clinical laboratory will analyze the blood sample for the individual biomarkers listed on your chosen panel, you'll still need tools to assist with reading, interpreting, and communicating the results from a functional perspective. This could include:

- **FBCA tracking forms:** These simple PDFs offer a method for smaller practices to track their patient's health over time and progress toward pre-defined optimal levels of the various blood biomarkers one might test for. We've included a sample form at the end of this document for you to get started with.
- **Conversion calculators/charts:** Depending on where you, your patients, and your clinical laboratory are located, you may find it helpful to keep a quick reference chart or calculator on hand to convert different units of measurement.
- **FBCA software:** As your practice scales, using physical forms or digital spreadsheets may be insufficient for tracking and analysis. In order to perform more analyses faster, many practitioners turn to purpose-built FBCA software.

## THE RIGHT KNOWLEDGE

Functional Medicine exists, in large part, due to patients' frustrations over healthcare providers not explaining and contextualizing their overall health. While FBCA can be a powerful tool to support practitioners in providing this crucial context, it's up to the practitioner to cultivate the knowledge necessary to provide that context in the first place.

A comprehensive chemistry and complete blood count/hematology panel may contain **upwards of 80 individual biomarkers**. You will have to know what each of these biomarkers mean, what body systems they refer to, and what possible conditions and dysfunctions they are associated with.

You will also have to understand the various patterns that exist between these individual biomarkers and what clinical dysfunctions they point to. Then, you need to be able to translate that complex information into a language that the patient can understand.

This technical knowledge lies outside the scope of this guide, however. If you're interested in building up your FBCA knowledge, [Optimal DX offers a 12-week online "FBCA Mastery Training Program"](#) that covers what different blood biomarkers can signify and how they relate to one another from a Functional perspective.

See ["Where to Learn More"](#) at the end of this guide for more information.

## THE RIGHT PATIENTS

You may have the support, tools, and knowledge to carry out FBCA — now you need to identify **the patients who stand to benefit the most**.

Unless you've opened up a brand-new practice, it's likely that you already have an existing database of patients. You can (and should) integrate FBCA into your new patient onboarding going forward, but this can also serve as a method to support assessment and treatment in patients with certain conditions as well as to check up on patients who haven't been to your practice in a while.

To begin, identify patients experiencing complaints in the following areas. This list isn't comprehensive — as you further your knowledge of blood biomarkers and their role in Functional Medicine, you'll develop a more refined understanding of how you can help.

### Inflammatory Conditions

- Obesity
- Arthritis
- Muscular inflammation
- Atherosclerosis
- Autoimmune disease

### Cardiovascular Disease

- Hypertension
- Hyperlipidemia
- Atherosclerosis
- Congestive Heart Failure
- Vascular insufficiencies

### Blood Sugar Dysregulation

- Metabolic syndrome
- Type II diabetes
- Insulin sensitivities

### Hormonal Issues

- Decreased thyroid function
- Decreased libido
- Menstrual problems
- Menopausal issues
- Infertility (male and female)

### Gastrointestinal Conditions

- Hypochlorhydria
- Pancreatic insufficiency
- Gallbladder dysfunction
- Gastric inflammation
- Dysbiosis,
- Leaky gut syndrome

### Other Conditions

- Weight loss or change in body composition
- Energy issues like fatigue, weakness, etc.
- Stress-related issues

If your patients have or have had any of these conditions, then regular FBCA can assist you in **identifying the root cause of the issue**, evaluating the efficacy of treatment protocols and whether your patients' overall health is improving or degrading.

# How to Get Started

Having established the foundational elements of FBCA, now it's time to actually begin implementing your FBCA program.

## INTRODUCING YOUR PATIENTS TO FBCA

### **New Patient — Option A**

Every new patient that comes into your office gets a blood test before they come and see you. They fill out all office paperwork (intake forms, questionnaires, request for records forms, etc.), and they get their blood tested. This way, you'll have their test results and corresponding insights into their health ready before they even see you. One major advantage of this approach is the “wow” factor — if you're able to pinpoint a complaint they haven't brought up yet or hadn't thought to discuss with you, you'll have immediately demonstrated your value.

### **New Patient — Option B**

You wait to test your patient's blood until after their first office visit. The first visit allows you to create some rapport, get a full understanding of what's going on with them and to communicate the value of what you do and the methods you use to do them. At this point the patient is primed and interested in having a lab test performed. When the results come back, you can schedule them for a second appointment for a review of findings.

### **Existing Patients — Maintenance/Wellness**

As mentioned previously, a functional analysis of blood test results is a great way to get existing patients or patients that you haven't seen in a while to come back into the office for a visit. Having blood tested annually is a good cadence to establish — this could be done on the anniversary of their becoming a patient with you, around their birthday or on an arbitrary date.

## SET ASIDE AN APPROPRIATE AMOUNT OF TIME

Operating a successful Functional Medicine practice requires a combination of preparatory clinical analysis and face time with potential patients. Solving our patients' most challenging health conditions isn't a task that can be performed within a 10 or 15 minute appointment.

Instead, we recommended that **60 minutes be allotted for a new Functional Medicine patient consultation and 30 minutes for clinical report/interpretation of findings.**

Healthcare professionals are not only responsible for facetime with patients but also to set aside time to review and study the case. For many healthcare professionals, this is second nature; yet some still feel comfortable "winging" the preparatory clinical analysis. In order to run a Functional Medicine clinic in a sustainable way, it is crucial that practitioners do their due diligence in the clinical preparation of each and every case.

Aside from the purely ethical reasons for taking the time to prepare a case, your patients will be able to sense your preparedness (or the lack thereof) and the confidence associated with it. They'll feel that they're in better hands and will be more likely to follow your guidance.

## DETERMINE HOW YOU WILL CHARGE FOR FBCA

You'll want to establish a price point that's both fair and reasonable to you as well as your patients. Take into consideration your costs, the margin you believe is fair for your practice and what your patients can afford. In evaluating this, keep in mind the following questions:

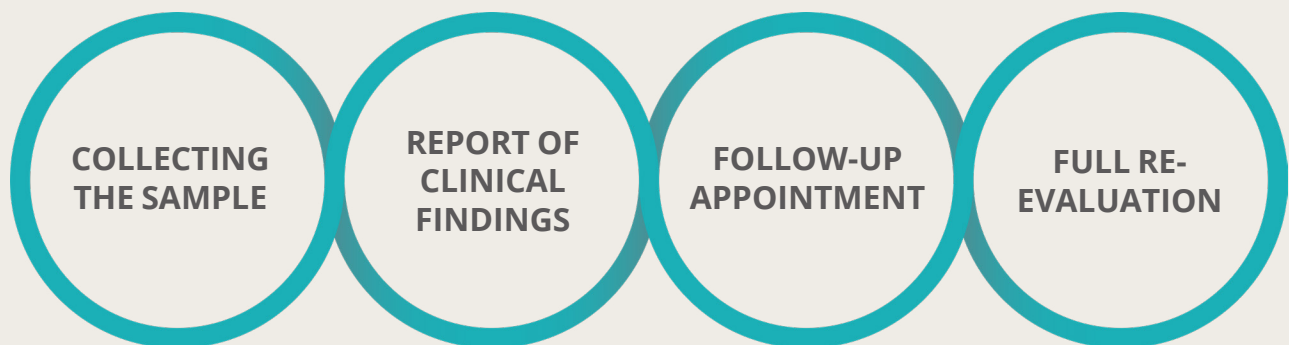
- Will I pass on the cost of the blood test to my patient or will I mark it up?
- Will I charge a lab consultation fee?
- If I use a report from software, will I charge extra for that?
- Should I bundle the cost of the lab test with the associated office visits?

Bundling a test together with two consultations (one for a report of findings and one for a follow-up) has the benefit of continued business for your practice, cost savings for your patient and greater odds that your patient will follow your medical advice after discussing the results of their blood test.

# Recommendations for FBCA Appointments

Regrettably, a successful FBCA experience can't take place within the span of 24 hours. You need to collect the blood sample, wait for results to come back, assess the findings, inform the patient, build a treatment plan, follow up on that plan — in order to manage all of these steps, it's important to have a structure in place.

## 4-STEP STRUCTURE OF A FBCA APPOINTMENT



## COLLECTING THE SAMPLE

Drawing blood is simple enough, but there's more to this stage than that. First, you'll need to determine what kind of blood test to order. For example, if your patient is new and doesn't have any major complaints, it could be a good idea to order a generic, full male- or female-oriented blood panel.

Or, your patient may have come to you complaining of fatigue. You may suspect some form of blood sugar dysregulation and should order a comprehensive metabolic panel as a result. (See the appendix for recommended biomarkers to include on various panels).

Equally important is communicating to your patient the reason for a blood test, the benefits and limitations, and next steps. So many patients come to Functional Medicine practitioners because they've taken a greater interest in their health than allopathic medicine can satisfy. They've come to you for a more in-depth, informative experience; you should fulfill that expectation.

## FBCA REPORT OF CLINICAL FINDINGS

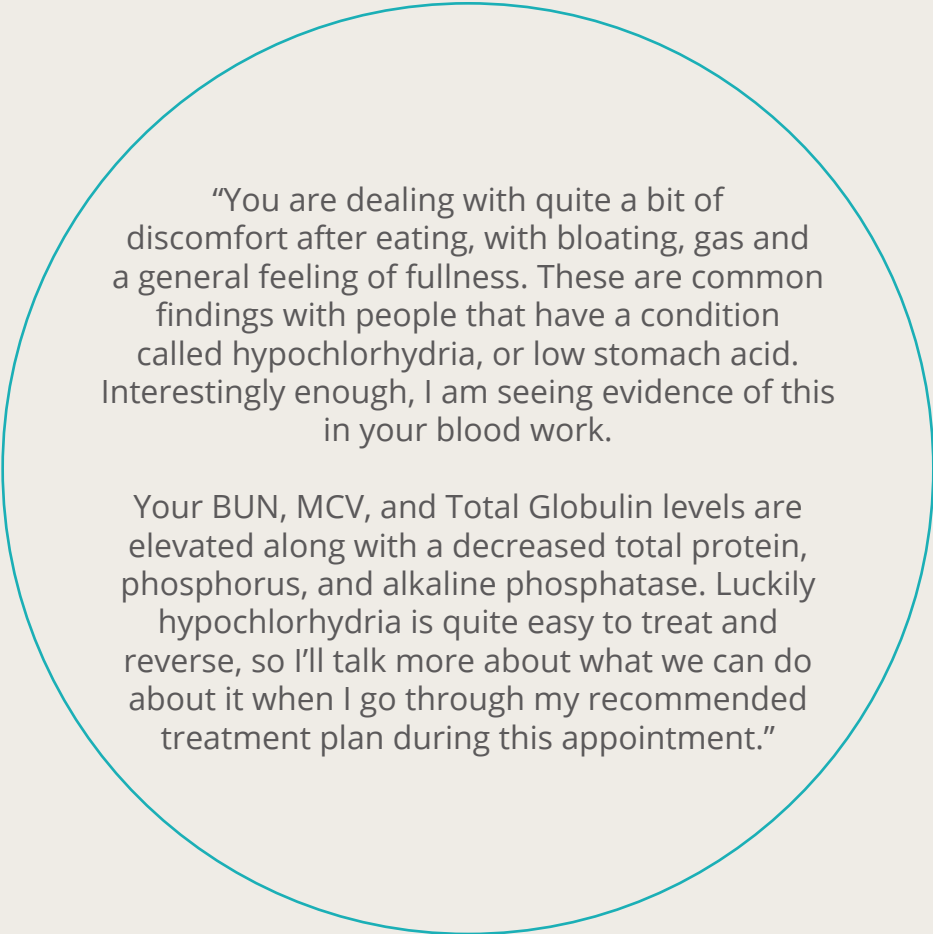
After receiving and analyzing the results of your patient's blood test, it's time to schedule a visit to provide your patient with a report of clinical findings. The purpose of this visit is:

- 1.** To begin to rule in and rule out the underlying causes and dysfunctions in the functional systems of the body
- 2.** To give you objective indicators to back up the subjective indicators that your patient has described or you have observed
- 3.** To educate the patient about the underlying cause of their problems
- 4.** To establish what you will be recommending for treatment

Ideally, you'll have tracked the results of their blood test on an FBCA tracking form or with a software tool that shows both the normal ranges of a given biomarker and the optimal, Functional ranges. At this point, you should provide your patient with the form or report so you can discuss their results.

Anything that falls outside of the normal ranges indicates potential pathology. Values outside of this range are either diagnostic or highly suggestive of a given disease. Values within the normal range but outside the optimal range suggest that **a patient may be trending towards disease and could be healthier**. As practitioners of Functional Medicine, our job is to catch biomarkers once they fall out of the optimal range, but before they develop into disease.

Prior to meeting the patient, take a look at the biomarkers of the FBCA report and see if there are any patterns in the results. Then, when you go over your findings with the patient, make sure you convey the results and next steps in a clear manner and that you relate these findings to their symptoms. As an example, you might say:



“You are dealing with quite a bit of discomfort after eating, with bloating, gas and a general feeling of fullness. These are common findings with people that have a condition called hypochlorhydria, or low stomach acid. Interestingly enough, I am seeing evidence of this in your blood work.

Your BUN, MCV, and Total Globulin levels are elevated along with a decreased total protein, phosphorus, and alkaline phosphatase. Luckily hypochlorhydria is quite easy to treat and reverse, so I'll talk more about what we can do about it when I go through my recommended treatment plan during this appointment.”



## FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT

After recommending treatment, you'll want to check back in after a certain amount of time to evaluate its efficacy. It's a good idea to schedule this immediately after the report of clinical findings — that way, patients will feel obligated to stick to their treatment plan, knowing that a second visit is coming up.

During the follow-up visit, you can assess the progress of the treatment through many of the systems you used to make the initial assessment, such as health questionnaires or further blood testing.

Your patient's complaints might not disappear overnight, so make sure to emphasize any improvement that arises. Encourage them to **keep a health journal** to track their lifestyle changes, diet, exercise routine, sleep patterns, and stress reduction techniques. This will help encourage patients to stick to your treatment plan and to consider the impact that it's having on their overall health.

## FULL RE-EVALUATION

After some time has passed, you'll want to schedule a full re-evaluation of your patient's health. This should include a repeat of any tests they've already done, including blood chemistry or any other outsourced tests (e.g., saliva testing, stool testing).

At this point, you should develop an evaluation report outlining your assessment of where the patient is in terms of their health goals and the resolution of the dysfunctions. Compare their current health and wellness to their initial health goals.

Based on their status, they should either be encouraged to maintain their health and habits, or they still have a way to go and their treatment protocol needs to be fine-tuned.

# How to Scale Your Practice

Offering FBCA to your patients is an excellent way to make your practice stand out from the crowd. With the additional insights and proactive treatment that FBCA enables, it's likely that you will begin to see more patients as your reputation grows.

Using the FBCA tracking form supplied in the appendix to assess and measure your patients' health is a great way to get started. But you'll find that as you take on more patients in your practice, keeping track of their individual blood biomarker profiles and tracking their health over time will become a challenge.

At Optimal DX, we developed a blood chemistry analysis software to solve this very problem. The ODX software allows you to enter or import FBCA data, enabling you to **securely and digitally track your patients' health over time.**

In addition to organizing your patient data, the ODX software offers functionality to facilitate FBCA in your practice. This includes:

- Individual patient dashboards in your portal to provide critical information at a glance
- The automatic calculation of functional ratios
- Generating both practitioner- and patient-facing Functional Health Reports
- Algorithmically weighting, scoring and assessing biomarkers to make key observations into your patients' health

Ultimately, the ODX software provides efficiency to the FBCA process, enabling you to see more patients and deliver greater value, faster. [\*\*Contact our experts to discuss whether the ODX software can support your efforts\*\*](#) in guiding your patients to optimal health.

## Where to Learn More

This guide discussed the major features that a practitioner should keep in mind when considering implementing FBCA at their practice. What it doesn't include, however, is the Functional knowledge required to interpret the results of your patients' blood tests.

Every year, Optimal DX offers training to provide practitioners with in-depth knowledge of FBCA hosted by Dr. Dicken Weatherby, a leading authority in the Functional interpretation of blood test results.

In the training, we take a deep dive into:

- The biomarkers you'll find listed on a variety of blood panels
- The body's functional physiology
- How biomarkers relate to each other, to patient symptoms, and to dysfunction
- The discrete patterns that signify dysfunction
- And more.

Optimal DX's "FBCA Mastery Training Program" includes, 12 online modules of video training, lifetime access to the training material, audio and PDF downloads from all sessions, and bonus training from functional medicine experts.

You can sign up for the [\*\*FBCA Mastery Training here\*\*](#) — the registration period begins in September, but you can sign up on the waiting list anytime.

**SIGN UP TODAY**

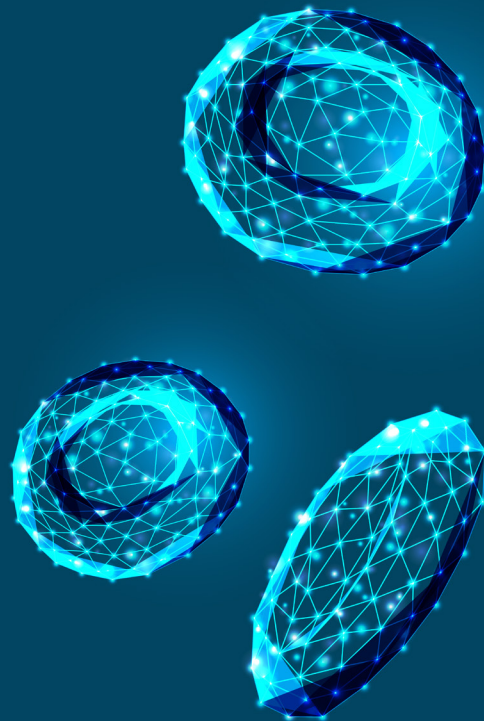
[optimaldx.com/fbca-training](https://optimaldx.com/fbca-training)

## Appendix: FBCA Forms

To support practitioners in their initial FBCA implementation, we've appended several forms that may prove beneficial.

These include:

- [FBCA tracking forms](#)
- [Suggested biomarker panels](#)



Need more support or ready to **create your first Functional Health report in minutes?** Talk to an FBCA expert to get started.

[CONTACT AN EXPERT](#)

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