INDICATIONS FOR TESTING
Symptoms of tissue hypoxia (e.g., fatigue, weakness, pallor, dizziness, fainting)

ORDER
CBC with platelet count and automated differential

Anemia present on CBC (males, Hb <13 g/dL; females, Hb <12 g/dL)

Consider other potential causes of symptoms

Yes

Classify by RBC indices

Low MCV (microcytic)

Evaluate for microcytic anemia

Normal MCV (normocytic)

ORDER
Reticulocytes, percent and number

Calculate corrected reticulocyte count

Elevated corrected reticulocyte count

No

Evaluate for anemia of inflammation; examine peripheral smear

Yes

Rule out blood loss and hemolysis

High MCV (macrocytic)

ORDER
Reticulocytes, percent and number

Calculate corrected reticulocyte count

Elevated corrected reticulocyte count

No

Yes

Rule out blood loss and hemolysis

Evaluate for megaloblastic anemia (including examination of peripheral blood smear for hypersegmented neutrophils); consider bone marrow examination

Abbreviations
Hb Hemoglobin
MCV Mean corpuscular volume
RBC Red blood cell