**Lithium monitoring:**

**Prior to starting lithium:**
*Obtain the following to assess for pre-existing conditions:*

- Urinalysis
- BUN/creatinine
- TSH with reflexive free T4. Some suggest obtaining antithyroid peroxidase antibody titers as well.
- Calcium
- Pregnancy test for those with childbearing potential
- ECG for those with risk factors of coronary artery disease (diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidemia, cigarette smoking, etc.)

*If any of the above indicate underlying pathology, consultation with a relevant specialist, if available, may be indicated before starting lithium treatment.*

**After starting lithium:**
*Lithium levels: Target trough level is between 0.8 and 1.2 mmol/L. Some patients who can’t tolerate 0.8 due to side effects can be maintained on 0.6. Levels should not exceed 1.2 given risk of lithium toxicity.*

*When to check level:*
- 5 to 7 days after starting and 5 to 7 days after dose changes while titrating.
- Level needs to be a trough draw.
- Before increasing the dose if there is no level from the previous two weeks
- Every 6 to 12 months for patients on a stable dose

*How to check level:* goal is to obtain a 12 hour serum trough. Checking levels in the morning before the first dose can be a convenient way to do this.

**Renal function:**
- Check urinalysis, BUN/creatinine every 2-3 months during the first 6 months of therapy, and every 6 to 12 months thereafter

**Thyroid function:**
- Routine physical exam of thyroid as part of regular medical care.
- Monitor TSH/reflexive T4 1-2 times during the first 6 months, then every 6-12 months thereafter.

**Parathyroid function:**
- Monitor serum calcium yearly
