Autoimmune diseases are characterized, amongst many other diverse features, by the occurrence of antibodies reacting with self-constituents of the body. They can be detectable in several biological fluids and by means of different techniques. The discovery of autoantibodies brought about a revolution in diagnosis and was the first of the many strides that have led to greater understanding of human autoimmune diseases.

Autoantibody tests are used to help diagnose autoimmune disorders. In a few cases, they are used to help evaluate the severity of the condition, monitor remissions, flares and relapses of the disorder and to monitor the effectiveness of treatment. Whether a particular autoantibody will be present is both very individual and a matter of statistics. Each will be present in a certain percentage of people who have a particular autoimmune disorder.