

## Having a Blood test

### Why do I need a blood Test?

A blood test is when a sample of blood is taken for testing in a laboratory. Blood tests have a wide range of uses and are one of the most common types of medical test.

### What happens during a blood test?

The procedure is performed by a trained member of staff.

An elasticated strap is placed around your arm and a small needle attached to a syringe, is inserted into one of the blood vessels in the inside of your elbow or wrist.

You will feel a sharp prick as the needle goes in but this shouldn't be too painful.

A sample of blood is then taken and the needle is removed. You will be given a pad to put pressure on the site of the injection, which stops any bleeding and should prevent bruising.

Most blood tests only take a few minutes to complete.

### What are the benefits of having a blood test?

A blood test can be used to:

- assess your general state of health
- confirm the presence of an infection
- see how well certain organs, such as the liver and kidneys, are working
- screen for certain medical conditions.

### What are the risks of having a blood test?

Only a small amount of blood is taken during the test so you shouldn't feel any significant after-effects.

However, some people do feel dizzy and faint during and after the test. If this happens to you, tell the person carrying out the test so they can help you feel more comfortable.

After a blood test, you may have a small bruised area on your skin where the needle went in. Rarely a larger area of bruising may appear. This can be because there was a lack of pressure at the site of the jab or the blood vessel was damaged by the needle. It is recommended not to bend your elbow after having blood taken as this opens up the vein and may result in more bruising.

Bruising is harmless and will disperse in time and does not require treatment. However, tell your GP if you frequently get bruises after having a blood test.

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Some conditions may increase the risk of bruising. These include:

- Taking anti-coagulant medicines such as warfarin or aspirin
- Conditions such as bleeding disorders
- Where it is difficult to locate the vein, for example if the arm is swollen
- Elderly patients may bruise more easily

In order to reduce this risk as much as possible, please tell the person taking the blood if you have any conditions as stated above, or if you have previously experienced problems during or following blood taking.

### **After the test**

After the blood sample has been taken, it will be put into a bottle and labelled with your name. It will then be sent to a laboratory where it will be examined.

The results are sent back to your GP or Consultant so you need to make a further appointment to get your results after approximately one week.

The Phlebotomy Service does not receive results of patients' blood tests. They go to the health professional who requested the test so they can review the results.

If you have any questions about the procedure please ask the member of staff taking the sample.