

HEFT PHLEBOTMY SERVICES –PATIENT INFORMATION

A Guide to Having a Blood Test

Phlebotomy is the practice of drawing blood and is performed primarily to diagnose and monitor a patient's condition. The Blood tests are requested by your GP /Consultant /Health Care Professional usually to assess your general state of health, to aid in diagnosis or to monitor treatment.

Blood Test Request form

You are expected to bring the Blood request form which is completed and signed by your GP / Consultant /Health Care Professional. The Phlebotomist will check your Identifications (Name & Address) matching the form to make sure you are the right person. **The Blood test cannot be performed without a Blood Request form.**

How is a Blood Sample taken?

The procedure is performed by a trained member of staff usually a Phlebotomist or Nurse. Equipment is assembled in a clean tray/dish – this is cleaned with a sterile wipe between use. A tourniquet (tight band) is usually put around your upper arm. This squeezes the arm, temporarily slowing down the flow of blood and causing the vein to swell. This makes it easier for the blood sample to be taken. An area of the skin is cleaned with antiseptic wipe then a small needle is inserted in to a vein from the inner arm. Blood is withdrawn in to sample bottles and the needle is then removed. Pressure is applied with a piece of cotton wool or gauze until the bleeding has stopped and then a small plaster is applied. Please tell the Phlebotomist if you are allergic to sticking plaster.

Will it hurt? .

The initial insertion of the needle involves a pin prick sensation but after that the rest of the procedure should be quite painless. Some people experience continued discomfort or pain. The cause is unknown but is thought to be associated with nerves under the surface of the skin. This usually settles quite quickly, but if it persists you should consult your GP.

Will it Bruise?

A small bruise or lump (haematoma) may develop after the Venepuncture, but this is usually self-limiting and does not require treatment. Pressing firmly on the site until the bleeding has stopped should help to minimize any bruising or prolonged bleeding.



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Some conditions may increase the risk of bruising, these include:

- **Drugs such as Warfarin or Aspirin**
- **Conditions such as a bleeding disorder or low platelets (thrombocytopenia)**
- **When it is difficult to locate the vein, for example if the arm is swollen (Oedema)**
- **Elderly Patients**

To help reduce this risk as much as possible, please tell the person taking the blood if you have any such conditions or if you have had a problem in the past after a blood test. Should you experience excessive bruising or prolonged bleeding, then apply further firm pressure to the area. A few ice cubes wrapped in a towel may help reduce any swelling or bruising.

What happens to the blood samples?

The Blood Samples are processed in the pathology laboratory and the results sent to the Doctor or the Clinician who requested the blood tests.



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