

Pathology

Phlebotomy - A guide to having a blood test

Coventry and Warwickshire Pathology services offer a blood taking service at over 30 sites, including a number of community sites such as pharmacies, GP surgeries and health centres. When a hospital doctor, GP or nurse requests that you have a blood test, you can access any of the phlebotomy clinics to have your blood test taken. **All our clinics are now by appointment only.**

Where our services are located

Please visit www.uhcw.nhs.uk/bloodtests to find locations where you can book your blood test in Coventry and Warwickshire and to book your appointment online. If you cannot book an appointment online, family and friends may be able to help. You can book appointments for more than one person from one account. Booking online is the quickest way to make an appointment.

If online booking is not possible, a telephone line is available for those who cannot book online. Please call 024 7615 3546 between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays.

Please remember to bring the blood test request form given to you by your doctor when attending your blood test appointment.

Why do you need a blood test?

Your doctor may request a blood sample for several reasons, including:

- Aiding diagnosis



Patient Information

- Monitoring treatment
- Excluding certain conditions
- Preventative medicine

In most cases, these samples are taken through a procedure known as Phlebotomy or Venepuncture, which involves taking blood from a vein. The following information will provide a detailed explanation of the procedure.

How is a blood sample taken?

The procedure is performed by a trained member of staff, usually a phlebotomist. All phlebotomists at our sites adhere to the same high standard of training provided by our Network Phlebotomy Training Supervisor.

An elasticated strap or cuff (tourniquet) is placed around your arm, just above the elbow. The area is then cleaned and a small needle is inserted into a vein on the inner arm.

Blood is withdrawn into sample tubes and the needle is removed. Pressure is applied at the site with a piece of gauze until the bleeding stops and then a small plaster is applied. **Please tell the person taking the blood if you are allergic to sticking plaster.**

Phlebotomy process for children under the age of 16

Extra time and staff are required to perform the phlebotomy on younger patients. We ensure that our younger patients are not rushed and that the best patient experience is achieved.

Children Under 16 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Appointments are available to book online at specific clinic locations across Coventry and Warwickshire. Please visit www.uhcw.nhs.uk/bloodtests to book an appointment.

Is it a new needle?

The phlebotomist will always use a new sterile needle and remove the cover before taking your blood sample. Once your sample has been taken, you will see the phlebotomist dispose of the needle and holder into a container for sharp objects.

Will it hurt?

The initial insertion of the needle involves a pinprick sensation but after that, the rest of the procedure should be quite painless. It is possible that patients will experience discomfort during and immediately following the procedure. This discomfort usually settles quite quickly, but if it persists, you should consult your doctor.

Will it bruise?

Bruising or a small lump (haematoma) may develop after a blood sample is taken. Applying firm pressure to the site until the bleeding stops should help minimize this. Bruising is harmless and will disperse with time, usually not requiring treatment. Some conditions may increase the risk of bruising, including:

- Medications such as warfarin or aspirin
- Conditions such as a bleeding disorder or low platelets (thrombocytopenia)
- Difficulty in locating the vein, for example, if the arm is swollen (oedema)
- Elderly patients may also bruise more easily

To reduce this risk as much as possible, please tell the person taking the blood if you have any such conditions or if you have previously experienced problems following blood collection.

What happens to the blood samples?

The samples are transported to the pathology laboratory from all clinic locations and begin processing on the same day. The results are sent to the doctor who requested the sample to be taken as soon as they are completed.

How do you get results?

Results are available from your doctor. We do not give results directly to patients, as it is usually necessary for your clinician or doctor to interpret their significance in relation to your consultation with them.

If you can't attend your blood test appointment:

If you have booked an appointment but cannot attend, please cancel the appointment online through your account where you booked your appointment. This will allow another person to take that appointment slot for their blood test. Missed appointments waste NHS resources and result in longer wait times for others needing tests.

Specific tests

Some patients or tests have specific requirements, which your doctor will discuss with you.

- Yellow dosage books for patients who are taking Warfarin must be presented when you arrive for your blood test
- **A specific appointment for a Glucose Tolerance Test (GTT)** will be required and a separate information leaflet is available for this.
- For some specific types of blood tests your doctor may require you to fast.

Fasting - what does it mean?

If your doctor has requested a fasting blood test, this means that for 10 to 12 hours before the blood test and until after the blood is collected you should **not**:

- Eat food
- Drink anything other than water
- Chew chewing gum (even sugar-free)
- Eat mints, cough drops, cough linctus or throat lozenges
- Smoke

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However, you may:

- Drink plain water
- Take prescribed medication with water before the test, unless directed otherwise by your doctor. If you are on medications that should be taken with food or if you are diabetic, please seek advice from your doctor. Please bring a list of your medications with you for the blood test.

For some tests, the sample taken needs to be processed very quickly. Your doctor will ask you to attend a hospital blood test (phlebotomy) clinic for the sample to be taken and transferred immediately to the laboratory. These tests are listed below:

Commonly requested tests	Hospital site where blood test can be performed		
	UHCW	Rugby St Cross	City of Coventry HC
ACTH	✓	✓	✓
Aldosterone and Renin	✓	✓	✓
Amino acids	✓	✓	✓
Ammonia	✓	X	X
Biotinidase	✓	✓	✓
Calcitonin	✓	✓	✓
C-peptide	✓	✓	✓
Cryoproteins	✓ before 3pm	X	X
Free fatty acids and 3hydroxybutyrate	✓	✓	✓
Gastrin	✓	✓	✓

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Gut hormones (chromogranin A and B)	✓	✓	✓
Homocysteine	✓	✓	✓
Insulin	✓	✓	✓
Lactate	✓	✓	✓
Metanephrines (plasma)	✓	✓	✓
Quantiferon	✓	✓	✓
Thiamine (Vitamin B1)	✓	✓	✓
Vitamin C	✓	X	X

Less frequently requested tests (usually only by a Hospital Consultant)	UHCW	Rugby St Cross	City of Coventry HC
C1q complement	✓	✓	✓
C3d complement component	✓	✓	✓
C3 Nephritic factor	✓	✓	✓
CH50/CH100	✓	✓	✓
CTX	✓	✓	✓
EMA binding test for Hereditary spherocytosis	✓	X	X
Lymphocyte function tests	✓	X	X

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Oxalate (plasma)	✓	✓	✓
Respiratory burst test	✓	X	X
PHA test	✓	X	X
PTHrP	✓	✓	✓
White cell (lysosomal) enzymes (excluding Fabrys or Pompes testing)	✓ before 10:30	X	X
Vitamin B2	✓	✓	✓
Vitamin B6	✓	✓	✓

Additional information

If you have any questions about the phlebotomy procedure, please ask the member of staff taking the sample or your doctor.

For more information on blood tests, please visit www.uhcw.nhs.uk/bloodtests

To learn about the conditions and diseases that blood tests are used to diagnosis and monitor, please visit Lab test online UK: www.labtestsonline.org.uk

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact the Pathology department on 024 7696 5427 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

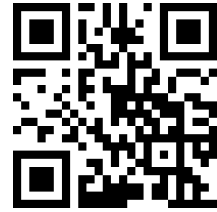
Patient Information

Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

Have your say. Scan the QR code or visit:

www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback



Document History

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