

Pathology Department

Phlebotomy - A Guide to having a blood test

Coventry and Warwickshire Pathology Services offers a blood taking service at over 30 sites including a number of community sites; pharmacies, GP surgeries and health centres. When a hospital doctor, GP or nurse asks you to 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 see online at www.uhcw.nhs.uk/bloodtests for our list locations where you can book your blood test in Coventry and Warwickshire

Why do I need a blood test?

There are a number of reasons why your doctor may request that you have a blood sample taken. These are usually to:

- Aid diagnosis,
- To monitor treatment,
- To exclude certain conditions,
- As preventative medicine.

In most cases these samples will be taken by a procedure known as Phlebotomy or Venepuncture, i.e. taking blood from a vein. The information given below will explain the procedure in more detail.



How is a blood sample taken?

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

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

Blood is withdrawn into sample tube(s) and the needle is then removed. Pressure is applied at the site with a piece of gauze until the bleeding has stopped 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

Younger patients require extra time and staff to perform the phlebotomy. We would like to make sure 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, and appointments are available on-line at University Hospital Coventry, City of Coventry Health Centre, Rugby St Cross or George Elliot Hospital phlebotomy clinics only.

www.uhcv.nhs.uk/bloodtests

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 pin prick sensation but after that the rest of the procedure should be quite painless. It is possible that patients will experience discomfort during, and immediately after the

Patient Information

procedure. This usually settles quite quickly, but if it continues you should consult your doctor.

Will it bruise?

Bruising or a small lump (haematoma) may develop after taking a sample of blood. Applying firm pressure to the site until the bleeding has stopped should help to minimize this. Bruising is harmless and will disappear with time and does not usually require treatment. Some conditions may increase the risk of bruising. These include:-

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

In order 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 taking.

What happens to the blood samples?

The samples are transported to the pathology laboratory from all clinic locations, and begin to be processed 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 I get my 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 the significance in relation to your consultation with them.

I can't attend my blood test appointment, what should I do?

If you have booked an appointment and then can not attend, please cancel the appointment online, through your account where you booked your appointment. This will allow another person to take that

Patient Information

appointment for their blood test. Appointments where the person does not attend to have their blood test waste NHS resources and mean that others have to wait longer to have their 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 GTT appointment** will be required for a Glucose Tolerance Test (GTT) and a separate information leaflet is available for this.
- For some specific types of blood test 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

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 which should be taken with food or if you are diabetic please seek advice

Patient Information

from your doctor. Please bring a list of your medications with you for the blood test.

List of Specialist tests where samples that **MUST** be collected at a Hospital Phlebotomy Department

For some tests the sample taken needs to be processed very quickly, for these tests 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 4pm	X	X
Free fatty acids and 3hydroxybutyrate	✓	✓	✓
Gastrin	✓	✓	✓
Gut hormones (chromogranin A and B)	✓	✓	✓
Homocysteine	✓	✓	✓

Patient Information

Insulin	✓	✓	✓
Lactate	✓	✓	✓
Metanephrines (plasma)	✓	✓	✓
PTH	✓	✓	✓
Quantiferon	✓	✓ before 4pm	✓
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
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

Patient Information

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 go to www.uhcw.nhs.uk/bloodtests

For the conditions and diseases that blood tests are used to diagnosis and monitor, please visit the website Lab Tests 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.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

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