

Frequently Asked Questions

How long will this procedure take?

The drawing of blood takes approximately five minutes. Some tests might take longer (e.g., a Glucose Tolerance Test takes approximately four hours). For routine blood work, our goal is to take no longer than 20 minutes, including wait time.

How is a blood sample taken?

A phlebotomist, a member of our staff especially trained to draw blood, performs the procedure. A tourniquet will be placed around your arm just above the elbow, and the skin will be cleaned. A sterile needle will be inserted into the vein near the elbow.

Blood will be drawn into a sample tube(s) and the needle removed. Pressure will be applied at the site with a piece of gauze until the bleeding has stopped, and then a latex-free compression bandage applied.

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 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 painless. On rare occasions some patients experience discomfort following the procedure. This usually settles quickly.

Will it bruise?

Rarely a small bruise or lump (hematoma) 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 disperse with time and does not usually require treatment.

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

- Medications 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 (edema)
- Elderly patients may bruise more easily.

In order to reduce this risk as much as possible, tell the phlebotomist if you have any such conditions or if you have previously experienced problems following blood taking.

What happens if I feel dizzy or faint?

Fainting while your blood is being drawn does not occur frequently. If you are prone to fainting, tell the phlebotomist prior to the procedure. Our staff is trained to handle adverse reactions.

What happens to the blood samples?

The samples are processed in our laboratory, and the results sent to your doctor who requested the sample to be taken.

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 doctor to interpret the results together with the clinical findings.

Additional information?

If you have any questions about the phlebotomy procedure, ask a member of our staff or your doctor.