

Therapeutic Venesection

You have been referred to our service for therapeutic venesection. This is the simplest and quickest way of reducing the excessive amount of red cells or iron in your blood. This will be done by removing up to 500mls of blood at a time and it is exactly similar to blood donation.

How frequent will this be required?

This is quite variable and different for each person.

While you are undergoing venesection treatment you will need to have regular blood tests, to check your iron stores, haemoglobin, haematocrit and liver function. This is important to assess your response and determine the frequency needed.

At the beginning you may need to have a relatively frequent venesection treatment weekly or fortnightly. However once certain target level has been achieved you may need it less frequent every 2-6 months depending in your condition and treatment response.

How is a venesection done?

Before starting the venesection the procedure will be explained to you by our trained staff. Please ask any questions you may have. You may then be asked to sign a consent form for this procedure if not done before.

You will be asked to lie on a bed and a tourniquet is applied to your arm similar to blood sampling. The needle, which is already fixed to the blood collection bag, is inserted into the large vein in the front of your elbow. The process roughly takes about 15 -30 minutes.

Is it a safe procedure?

It is the responsibility of your doctor to assess your suitability to commence venesection.

In every visit, our trained staff will ask you standard questions about your current health and how you tolerated your last session before commencing the procedure.

If you are taking warfarin, diuretics or blood pressure medication, please discuss with your referring doctor prior to your appointment if your dosage needs to be modified on the day.

On the day of procedure, please ensure you eat normally, drink extra fluids and take your regular medications.

Occasionally patients may need to have their venesection treatment temporarily postponed or permanently cancelled depending on their general health or their response to treatment.

Venesection is generally safe and has few uncommon side effects such as; bruising, dizziness, blood pressure drop, fainting, vasovagal syncope, venous scarring, infection at the site of needle puncture or rarely nerve injury. All these risks are minimized by having trained, experienced staff and by patient co-operation.

Please tell staff immediately of any symptoms of dizziness, swelling, pain or pins and needles in your arm

After the procedure

Please leave the compression bandage intact for approximately 30 minutes and avoid vigorous exercise or heavy lifting using that arm for a few hours.

If you developed a reaction after leaving the collection centre please seek medical advice and inform our staff immediately at your next visit.