

Before Your Blood Test

Make sure you have a Lab Requisition Form with you. Your doctor or midwife will give this to you before you come in for your blood test. This form will let the Phlebotomist (person who will take your blood sample) know what tests are required.

Most blood tests usually don't require any special preparation and take only a few minutes – some tests do require an appointment, fasting or may have other requirements prior to the blood test. Your doctor or midwife should let you know if there is any preparation required before your test or you can check this on our website www.sclabs.co.nz

What to Expect During the Test

No one looks forward to having a blood test, but the procedure is usually brief and uneventful. Most people are in and out of the collection room in less than 15 minutes.

The Phlebotomist will call you into the room and ask you to be seated. You will be required to tell the Phlebotomist your full name, date of birth, address and phone number.

The Phlebotomist may also have questions for you about the medications you take, or if you have had anything to eat or drink before the beginning of the test.

If you have fainted in the past or have a phobia of needles, please let the Phlebotomist know right away so they can position you so you're less likely

to faint and keep equipment out of sight if necessary to help keep you at ease.

Should a phlebotomist be required to collect a sample from a patient that might be extremely physically or verbally reluctant, and if they are instructed to go ahead and take the sample by the care giver, parent, doctor or nurse they may seek assistance from another staff member. This staff member will hold the patient's arm gently but firmly to ensure the blood collection is safe for both the patient and the phlebotomist. This will be explained to you before it is done and if consent is given it will be recorded on a sticker and placed on your request form.

Children under 10 years should be routinely prepared to be immobilised as movement prior to the procedure may not be intended but may occur by reflex once the procedure has begun.

Our Phlebotomists are highly skilled at drawing blood from a variety of patients. Some veins are trickier to draw from than others and may require different equipment to be used.

Once you are in the correct position the Phlebotomist will gather the required equipment, wash / cleanse their hands and put on gloves.

The phlebotomist will then place a tourniquet around the bicep area of your arm. This will feel a bit tight but it won't be left on for very long. You will be asked to make a fist and hold your hand still

and tight. The Phlebotomist will then press against your skin to locate the best vein.

The skin is then cleansed with an alcohol wipe. This may feel a bit cold. It will kill any bacteria at or near the site. After the alcohol has dried the needle is then inserted into your vein.

The insertion of the single use, sterile needle, is relatively quick and will feel like a small pinch or sharp sting. Depending on how many blood tubes are drawn the needle may be left in for anywhere from 30 seconds to a couple of minutes.

If you experience pain, any more than minor discomfort during your blood test, please let your Phlebotomist know straight away.

After the blood has been drawn, the Phlebotomist will remove the needle and hold gauze against the puncture site. You will then be asked to apply pressure on the site. Applying pressure following the blood test greatly reduces the chance of bruising and encourages the site to stop bleeding (to clot). Do not bend your arm, as this increases the chance of bruising. Hold the pressure until you are asked to remove your hand.

The Phlebotomist will label the blood tubes on the table in front of you, then check the site to ensure the bleeding has stopped.

The Phlebotomist will then apply a plaster.

Precautions following the Blood Test

It is recommended the plaster remain covering the site for at least 15mins to reduce the chance of infection.

It is also recommended that you do not lift, strain or carry anything with your arm for at least two to three hours. This also reduces the chances of bruising.

If, despite this, you do develop a bruise, apply ice wrapped in a towel to the area for 15-30 minutes.

If you continue to experience pain following the blood test or have any concerns, please let the Laboratory know or contact your doctor for advice.

Tips

Relax - The phlebotomist has been trained well to perform blood tests.

Take a deep breath and stay calm.

Try to close your eyes and think of something peaceful to help you keep calm.

Talk to the phlebotomist and let them know blood tests are not your 'favourite thing', they will do their best to keep you distracted and comfortable.

Follow Our Instructions - It will make things easier for you and your Phlebotomist.

To make sure the blood test goes smoothly your Phlebotomist will ask you to do certain things before, during, and following the blood test.

This may include holding your hand tight, rotating your hand, saying and confirming

information, breathing calmly, or pressing the gauze over the needle site.

Drink Water - Drink plenty of water before your blood test and ensure you are well hydrated prior to your blood test.

Blood is about 50 percent water, so the more water you drink, the plumper your veins become and the easier it is for the Phlebotomist to locate your veins and draw blood.

Keep Warm - Keeping warm before your blood test will make your veins easier to find and increase circulation.

Getting Your Results

Your blood test results will be sent back to the referring doctor, midwife or other health professional and will take two to three days for standard tests.

If you would like a copy of your results let your Phlebotomist know at the time you have your blood test and they will organise an email copy to be sent to you.

Children

Note – not all our collection centres are able to collect blood from children. Check our website for details.

Complaints and Compliments

Feedback forms are available in our collection rooms or via our website www.sclabs.co.nz.



Patient Information Booklet

What You Need to Know Before Your Blood Test



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