



Patient & Family Guide  
2025

# Phlebotomy



[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

# Phlebotomy

## What is a phlebotomy?

- To lower the amount of blood cells in your body, a needle is put into your vein in your hand or arm to let some of your blood drain through a plastic tube and into a bottle.
- This will make you feel better.
- This treatment is like the process of donating blood.

## How is a phlebotomy done?

- Your health care provider may plan for you to have a phlebotomy in an outpatient treatment area.
- **The first time you have a phlebotomy, someone should come with you in case you get dizzy or faint.**
- **You will need someone to drive you home after the treatment.**
- The amount of blood taken is different for everyone. You will probably have about 1 to 2 cups taken each time.
- You may need to have a phlebotomy every 2 to 4 weeks. This will depend on how fast your blood count goes back to normal.

## How do I get ready for a phlebotomy?

- **Starting the day before your treatment:**
  - › Drink 8 glasses of fluid (like water, milk, or juice) each day.
  - › **Do not** drink coffee, tea, colas, or alcohol.

- On the day of your appointment, eat breakfast and lunch.
- Plan to have someone bring you to and from your 1<sup>st</sup> appointment.
- Bring an up-to-date list of all your medications (including prescription and over-the-counter products, inhalers, creams, eye drops, patches, herbal products, vitamins, and supplements with you to your appointment.
- If you have cold or flu symptoms on the day of your appointment, call the treatment area to re-book. Please ask about the cancellation or re-booking policy for your treatment area.

## **What will happen after the phlebotomy?**

- The nurse will check your blood pressure and give you something to drink.
- You will need to stay in the treatment area for a short time to make sure you do not get dizzy or faint.
- If you feel dizzy or faint after leaving the unit, drink water and rest until you feel better.

If you have bleeding, put pressure for 5 minutes until the bleeding stops. **If bleeding does not stop, go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.**

- You may go back to your usual activities after 1 hour if you feel well. If you operate heavy machinery or work high up, **do not** go back to work right after your treatment.

- **Do not** do strenuous (hard) activities (like jogging) or activities that may strain the arm used during treatment (like exercise and heavy lifting) for at least 1 day after your treatment.
- **Do not** drink alcohol the evening after your treatment.
- You may eat as usual.
- If you have a bandage, you can keep it on for 4 to 6 hours after your treatment. If you do not have bleeding, you can take it off after 1 hour.

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:  
[www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources)

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Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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