



Patient & Family Guide
2020

Phlebotomy



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Phlebotomy

What is a phlebotomy?

To lower the amount of blood cells in your body, a needle is placed into your vein to let some of your blood drain through a plastic tube and into a bottle. This will make you feel better. This treatment is similar to donating blood.

How is a phlebotomy done?

- Your health care provider may arrange for you to have a phlebotomy in an outpatient treatment area.
- **The first time you receive this treatment, 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 drained is different for everyone. You will probably have about 1 to 2 cups taken out each time.
- You may need to have a phlebotomy every 2 to 4 weeks. This will depend on how fast your blood count returns to normal.

How do I get ready for a phlebotomy?

- **To lower the risk of complications, it is important that you:**
 - › Drink 8 glasses of fluid (like water, milk, or juice) the day before **and** the day of your treatment.

- › **Do not drink coffee, tea, colas, or alcohol starting the day before your treatment.**
- › Make sure that you eat breakfast and lunch before your appointment.
- › Do not drink alcohol the evening after your treatment.
- Arrange to have someone bring you to and from your first appointment.
- Bring a complete list of the medications you are taking, including any over-the-counter medications, herbs, or other supplements.
- If you have cold or flu symptoms on the day of your appointment, call the treatment area to re-book. Please see 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, apply 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 (such as jogging) or activities that may strain the arm used during treatment (such as exercise and heavy lifting) for at least 1 day after your treatment.
- You may eat and drink 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.

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.