



Therapeutic Venesection

Patient Information

What is Therapeutic Venesection?

Your doctor has referred you to our service for therapeutic venesection. This is the collection of up to 450 mls of blood at regular intervals which is necessary to reduce the total body iron load in patients with haemachromatosis and to reduce the 'thickness' of the blood in patients with some other medical conditions. Your doctor will determine how often venesection needs to occur and whether regular blood tests, to check your iron stores and liver function, are required.

How is it performed?

A needle is inserted into the large vein at the front of the elbow and blood is allowed to drain by gravity into a collection bag. The process takes about 15 minutes. The first venesection must be performed at Richmond Epworth Hospital.

Is it a safe procedure?

Your own specialist is responsible for assessing your suitability to commence donation. Every visit thereafter, our nurse will ask you standard questions about your recent health and how you tolerated your last visit before commencing collection. Occasionally patients may need to be deferred (temporarily postponed or permanently cancelled) if they are deemed too unwell or anaemic to continue donation.

Uncommonly some patients may experience dizziness, fainting or fits due to anxiety, pain or a drop in blood pressure. Very uncommon risks associated with venesection include bruising or infection at the site of needle puncture, or injury to the nerve or artery that lie close to the vein used to obtain the blood. All these risks are minimized by having trained, experienced staff and by patient co-operation.

Can the blood be used?

Blood collected by services apart from the Australian Red Cross Blood Service (ARCBS) is not suitable for general use and will be discarded. Haemachromatosis is not a contraindication to blood donation. If you are medically fit to donate according to ARCBS guidelines, you should donate via their service so that your blood may be used in the national blood supply. You or your doctor can contact the ARCBS on 9694 0211.

Patient Preparation

- On the day of donation, please ensure you eat normally, drink extra fluids and take your routine medications.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing to the procedure and do not commit to strenuous work or exercise on that day.
- If possible, arrange for someone to drive you home after the venesection until it is clear how you tolerate recurrent procedures.
- If you are taking warfarin, diuretic (fluid) tablets or blood pressure medication, please discuss with your referring doctor (in advance of your appointment) if your dosage needs to be modified on the day.
- Please tell staff immediately of any symptoms of dizziness, pain or pins and needles in your arm.
- Please leave the compression bandage intact for 30 minutes and avoid vigorous exercise of that arm for a few hours.
- If you had a reaction after leaving the collection centre please make the staff aware immediately at your next visit.

We welcome your questions regarding the procedure. Please contact the collection centre to which you have been referred or the Haematologist at Melbourne Pathology via the Switchboard (9287 7700).

Yours sincerely,

Dr Ellen Maxwell
Director of Haematology
Melbourne Pathology

Richmond - Suite 2.2, Level 2, Epworth Centre,
32 Erin Street 9429 2222

Box Hill – Epworth Eastern Hospital,
1 Arnold Street 9870 5473



Therapeutic Venesection Consent Form

Consent form to be completed and submitted with Melbourne Pathology request form.

CONSENT

I, _____

of _____

hereby consent to _____ undergoing the procedure of

Therapeutic Venesection.

I have received written and verbal information regarding this procedure and have had the opportunity to have any questions answered satisfactorily.

Patient/Guardian (signature) _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

Relationship to patient (if signing as guardian) _____

Witness (signature) _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

Please bring this consent form to your first appointment.