

Further information

NHS 111

111 is the NHS non-emergency number. It is fast, easy and free. **Call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency.**

Day ward

Grantham Hospital
Tel: 01476 464408

Grantham appointments

Tel: 01476 464639

Myeloproliferative disorders (including Polycythaemia Rubra Vera) and their treatment, can be found at Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research Fund:
Tel: 0207 405 0101
website at: www.lrf.org.uk

Genetic Haemochromatosis and it's treatment can be found at the Haemochromatosis Society:
Tel: 0208 449 1363
Website: www.haemochromatosis.org.uk

References

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.



If you require this information in another language, large print, audio (CD or tape) or braille please email the Patient Information team at patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk

Having a Venesection

Day Ward
Grantham Hospital

www.ulh.nhs.uk

What is venesection?

Venesection is the removal of approximately one pint of blood (similar to donating blood).

Why do I need a venesection?

Venesection is used to reduce the number of red cells in your blood, or to reduce the amount of iron in your body depending on your underlying medical condition. Venesection is the quickest and simplest way of doing this.

How often will I need to have a venesection?

This is very individual and will depend on your medical condition. At first you may need this weekly but as your condition becomes under control, you may only need a venesection every 6 to 12 weeks. There is no way of predicting when you will need one but blood tests prior to your appointment will tell us if you need a venesection.

How much blood will be taken at each time?

Approximately 450ml. This will depend on your weight and tolerance to the procedure.

How can I prepare for the procedure?

It is important to ensure you have eaten and had regular drinks prior to the procedure. It can also help to keep your arms warm as this will aid the nurse locating a vein.

VENESECTIONS APPOINTMENTS

DATE/TIME	DATE/TIME	DATE/TIME	DATE/TIME

APPOINTMENTS

DATE/TIME	DATE/TIME	DATE/TIME	DATE/TIME

How is a venesection carried out?

The nurse carrying out the venesection will explain and talk you through the procedure. You will be asked to lie on a couch and your blood pressure and pulse will be taken. The blood pressure cuff will be repositioned (upside down) on your upper arm, tightened slightly and you will be asked to clench your fist whilst keeping your arm stretched out straight. The needle, which is already fixed to the blood collection bag, is then inserted into one of the large veins in the inner bend of your arm (similar to a blood test) and is fixed in place with tape. This is then left in position and the blood is drained in to the attached bag. Once the correct amount of blood has been drained, the needle is removed and a small dressing or plaster will be applied and should be left in place for at least two hours.

How long does it take?

Allowing time for the insertion of the needle, about 15 minutes. You will be offered a drink and advised to rest on the couch for a further 15 minutes.

Are there any side-effects?

Usually people tolerate the procedure well without any ill effects. Occasionally people feel *faint* after the procedure. If this happens the nurse will ask you to lie flat and give you extra fluids to drink. This will usually make you feel better.

If this is a persistent problem we can give you fluids via a drip in your other arm during the procedure.

There may be some **bruising** which will take some days to disappear and as with any bruise this may be slightly uncomfortable. If **bleeding** occurs apply pressure for a few minutes until it stops.

When the needle is inserted it will feel uncomfortable for a few seconds. If you are **anxious or frightened by needles** please discuss with your medical team.

Are there any risks?

People who are on **Beta-blockers** or with certain types of **heart condition** may need to have a saline drip into a different vein during the procedure. Please discuss with your consultant.

It is also possible (but very rare) to have **nerve damage** around the veins during venesection. If you experience any pain or have pins and needles in your hand or arm during or after the procedure, please inform the nurse immediately.

Please inform the nurse **if** any of the following applies to you:

- You have a serious heart condition
- You are taking Warfarin
- You are taking beta-blockers (drugs which control blood pressure)
- You weigh less than 7 1/2 stone (49kg)
- You have previously fainted or felt unwell during or after a blood test/venesection
- You are frightened of needles

There is no reason why you should not drive or continue with normal activities before and after the procedure.

Is there an alternative treatment?

Your consultant has recommended venesection as being the best option.

Any alternative (s) to this treatment will already have been discussed with you, as this will depend on your individual circumstances and medical condition. If you would like more information, please speak to your consultant.

Could I be a blood donor instead?

For *some* patients this **may** be possible but you will need to discuss this with your consultant.

How do I arrange the venesection?

You will be seen by the consultant within the Haematology clinic and then asked to attend the day ward on the same day if you require a venesection.

A blood test will be required a few days prior to your appointment. You will be given a blood form prior to leaving the Haematology clinic.