Having a Venesection

An Information Leaflet

August 2011

Every Patient Matters
Please attend the following department for your visit:-

Department:

Day:  
Time:  
Date:  

If you think that you may be late, or if you cannot attend, or need to change your appointment, please let us know.

Contact telephone number:-  
Haematology secretaries 0161 419 5611 or 0161 419 5629

This leaflet has been written to explain what a venesection is and identify the risks and benefits there may be in having the treatment. It also tells you what to expect when you come for the treatment. There are also leaflets which explain what can cause an increase in red blood cells; please ask for one of these if you wish.

Why is it necessary to have a venesection?

When the number of red cells in the blood is increased, blood flowing around your body can become sluggish. This can then increase the chance of developing problems such as a thrombosis (blood clot). Removing the extra cells reduces the risks.

What is a venesection and what does it do?

This is the simplest and quickest way of reducing the number of red cells in your blood. It will reduce the amount of blood in your body by removing about one pint (half a litre) of blood at a time. It is similar to the procedure used for donating blood.
How often will this be needed?

This will be different for each person. At first you may need the treatment every week. Once your condition is under control you may only need it every 6-12 weeks. It may even be needed less often. Unfortunately there is no way of predicting at the outset how often you will need this doing, this will depend on how you respond.

About your appointment

Your stay should be no longer than one hour. On arrival on the Laurel Suite you will be welcomed by a receptionist. If you have an appointment letter/card please hand this to the receptionist.

How to find us

If you enter via the main hospital entrance please ask at reception for directions.

Before you come

Please can you tell us if you are on tablets to control your blood pressure - we may ask that you omit them on your first visit.

No special preparation is needed prior to this test - have your breakfast as usual. You do not need to bring anything in particular with you. There is no reason why you should not drive or continue with normal activities before and after the test.

However, as with any hospital visit you may feel anxious, for this reason you are welcome to bring someone with you to keep you company.

Remember to bring sufficient money to cover the cost of parking and refreshments. Beverages and light snacks are available from the WRVS shop, restaurant or vending machines.
How is a venesection done?

Before the venesection is carried out the procedure will be explained to you by the Doctor or the Specialist Nurse. Please ask any questions you may have, we will be happy to answer them. We will then ask you to sign a consent form for this treatment.

You will be offered a drink before the treatment and asked to lie on a bed. A tourniquet is applied to your arm in the same way as if you were having a blood sample taken. The needle, which is already fixed to the blood collection bag, is inserted into your vein. This is left in position throughout the collection, fixed in place with tape.

How long does it take?

The collection takes about 15 minutes. When it is completed the needle is removed, pressure is applied for a few minutes and a small dressing put on. You will be offered another drink and asked to remain on the bed for about a further 20 minutes.

What are the risks and benefits?

When the needle is inserted it will feel uncomfortable for a few seconds. When the needle is removed it may bleed a little. Pressure will be applied by holding the site firmly for a few minutes. If a person is taking tablets that thin the blood e.g. Warfarin, pressure will be applied for at least 10 minutes. We may ask you to stay a little longer to check there is no bleeding once pressure has been removed. There may also be some bruising which will take some days to disappear and as with any bruise this may be slightly uncomfortable.

Immediately following the removal of the blood you may feel a little dizzy; this is not unusual and can be minimised by resting before you leave the department and having another drink. It is advisable to rest for a few hours following the procedure.

Having a venesection is a very safe, simple and quick treatment for removal of an excess of red blood cells.
**Are there any side effects?**

Most people carry on as normal after they have left the Unit. Some people, however, do feel a little washed out for a couple of days after. Otherwise there are no side effects. If bruising has occurred this may be uncomfortable and we would ask that you contact us for advice.

**Further advice or information**

If you are worried or concerned following the procedure or if you would like any further advice or information please do not hesitate to ask - we will be more than happy to help.

Kate Bolton:
Specialist Nurse Haematology - 0161 483 1010 ask for bleep 1171

Or leave a message with the Haematology Secretaries, Claire or Michelle on 0161 419 5629/5611

**Our smoke free policy**

As per the smoke free law, smoking is not allowed by anyone anywhere on the hospital site. For further information, please read the patient information leaflet 'Policy on Smoke Free NHS Premises'.

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For information about Patient Services, contact Patient and Customer Services (PCS) on (0161) 419 5678
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A free interpreting service is available if you need help with this information. Please telephone Stockport Interpreting Unit on 0161 477 9000. Email: eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk

If you would like this leaflet in a different format, e.g. in large print, or on audiotape, or for people with learning disabilities, please contact PCS.

Your local contact for more information is Patient and Customer Services at Poplar Suite, SHH, Tel: 0161 419 5678 or

www.stockport.nhs.uk