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Blood clinic

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Patient information

Blood clinic

What to expect when having a blood test



Your blood test

You need to have a blood test as requested by your doctor. Your GP will give you a paper request form. Without this form, we are unable to do the blood test.

If your surgery sends you the form by email or text message, **you must print it before** attending the clinic.

The form includes your name, address, date of birth and hospital number. Please check that all your details are correct **before** coming for your blood test. You will be unable to have your blood test if your details are incorrect. It is also important that the name of the doctor/nurse who is requesting the test is on the form.

The form tells us which tests your doctor/nurse needs you to have. This is a legal document that can only be altered by the medical professional requesting the tests. Please do not alter it in any way. Phlebotomists are also unable to alter the form. Handwritten tests on the form will not be processed.

If you have been asked to fast, do not eat or drink for 12 hours before your blood test. You can have sips of plain water, and you should take any medication as usual.

Your doctor is unlikely to ask you to fast if you are diabetic.



Booking an appointment

You now need to book an appointment online in order to have a blood test by going to our website: <https://www.westhertshospitals.nhs.uk/ourservices/bloodtests.asp>. First-time users will need to register on Swiftqueue.

Booking appointments reduces waiting times and overcrowding at peak times by spreading appointments throughout the day.

The Swiftqueue system is very easy to use. The Swiftqueue website allows you to select an appointment time of your choice. You will also be able to view, reschedule and cancel appointments online. Details on how to book appointments and can be found on the [Swiftqueue](#) website.

Please register online via the [Swiftqueue](#) website or call 01727 897376.

For those unable to book online, please call 01727 897376 to make an appointment, between Tuesdays and Fridays, from 9am to 1pm.

The process

Upon your arrival at the blood clinic (Phlebotomy Department), please check in at the kiosk. Note that you may only check in 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment. The kiosk is user-friendly, and instructions are available next to the machine for your convenience. When your name shows on the calling screen, go through to see the phlebotomist (the person who takes the blood sample).

Please be aware that the phlebotomist is not informed about your medical condition or the specific reasons for your blood test. For any inquiries regarding your health, we recommend consulting with your physician.

The phlebotomist will ask you to sit in the chair. They will take your form and ask you to confirm your name and date of birth before explaining the procedure.

On certain days, other clinics will be operational, and these patients will be called in to see their clinician.



What to expect

Before you enter the room, the phlebotomist will make sure their hands are clean by sanitising their hands and putting on gloves. You can ask the phlebotomist to do this again in front of you. They will want you to be comfortable and feel confident about the procedure.

The best place for the phlebotomist to take blood is the inside of your elbow where your veins run close together. The phlebotomist will fasten a tourniquet around your arm. This may be a little uncomfortable but should not be painful and will only last for a minute or two. They will ask you to clench your hand and feel in the crook of your arm for a vein.

They will warn you of a small sting or scratch from the needle going into your vein as they take the blood sample/s. This only takes a minute.

The phlebotomist releases the tourniquet and removes the needle. You will be asked to press cotton wool on the needle spot. The pressure reduces the chance of bruising. Then the cotton wool will be secured with tape.

Possible side effects

The trust takes blood from over 27,000 people every month and the majority of patients do not experience any problems.

Taking blood is a safe procedure although it is invasive. Patients may feel a small amount of discomfort but should not experience severe pain. You may have some minor bruising and some mild tenderness over the site for a day or so.

If an artery is inadvertently punctured during your blood test you may experience bruising and swelling. It is very important to keep pressure applied to the area for a few minutes as soon as you notice any swelling or bruising. It is also helpful to apply a cold compress eg: wrap a bag of frozen peas in a tea towel and place this on your arm.

The bruising may take some time to go away, but it will eventually disappear.

All bruising can be painful so take a mild painkiller if you think you need it and are able to.

On rare occasions, when the phlebotomist puts the needle into your arm, the nerve may be touched, which can be very painful. If this happens, tell the phlebotomist immediately and the needle will be removed.

This should feel better almost immediately; however, there is a very slight possibility that it may remain painful for a while. Rest your arm and apply a cold compress to reduce pain. You may want to take a mild painkiller if you are able to.

Please do not wait if you are worried that something has gone wrong. We want to help you as soon as possible, so please let the phlebotomist know. They may advise you to see your doctor if you are concerned.

Needle phobia

If you have concerns about having a blood test, please call the clinic before your appointment to discuss how they can help you.

Babies and children up to the age of 12 years

Under 5s – Children under five years-old can only be seen at the Peace Children's Centre in Watford.

[Book a blood test at the Peace Children's Centre](#)

5-11 years – Children aged five to 11 years old can [be booked for a blood test at the Peace Children's Centre](#) or any of our hospitals at Hemel Hempstead, St Albans City and Watford using the [Swiftqueue](#) website.

Over 12s – Children over 12 years of age should book an adult appointment using the [Swiftqueue](#) website.

Locations and times when our blood clinics are open for appointments

Watford General Hospital ([site map](#))

The Blood clinic is on the ground floor of H Block (beside the Cardiac Centre, opposite Women and Children dept).

Monday to Friday, between 7.30am to 4.30pm

Anticoagulation (Warfarin) clinics:

Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, between 8am to 11.30am

[Watford General Hospital \(website\)](#)

Vicarage Road

Watford

Hertfordshire, WD18 0HB

Direct line: 01923 436334 (ext: 3210)

Hospital switchboard: 01923 244366

Hemel Hempstead Hospital ([site map](#))

The Blood Clinic is in the Marnham wing for all GP and outpatient services.

Monday to Friday, between 8.30am to 4.30pm

Haematology clinic patients:

The clinic is in the Verulam wing, by appointment letter only.

Anticoagulation (Warfarin) clinics:

The clinic is in the Verulam wing.

Thursday and Friday, between 8.30am to 11.30am

[Hemel Hempstead Hospital \(website\)](#)

Hillfield Road

Hemel Hempstead

Hertfordshire, HP2 4AD

Direct line: 01442 287803

Hospital switchboard: 01442 213141

St Albans City Hospital ([site map](#))

The Blood clinic can be found in Gloucester wing on level one.

Monday, Thursday and Friday, between 8am to 4pm

Tuesday and Wednesday, between 8.30am to 4.30pm

Anticoagulation (Warfarin) clinics:

Tuesday and Wednesday, between 8.30am to 11.30am

Warfarin patients have priority on Tuesday and Wednesday

[St Albans City Hospital \(website\)](#)

Waverley Road

St Albans

Hertfordshire, AL3 5PN

Direct line: 07727 897375/6

Hospital switchboard: 01727 866122

Useful website addresses

Online booking: www.swiftqueue.co.uk/hertfordshire.php

PALS: www.westhertshospitals.nhs.uk/patientexperience/pals.asp

Watford hospital information: www.westhertshospitals.nhs.uk/about/watfordgeneralhospital.asp

Hemel hospital information: www.westhertshospitals.nhs.uk/about/hemelhempsteadhospital.asp

St Albans hospital information: www.westhertshospitals.nhs.uk/about/stalbanscityhospital.asp

Saba parking: www.sabaparking.co.uk/app

Where can I park?

Car parking at Watford General Hospital is available in the [multi-storey car park](#). It's pay on exit, so you only pay for the time you need. You can pay by cash or card. The post code for the car park is **WD18 0LT**.

The external car park ticket machines on all sites **only accept cash**. However, you can pay by card via the [Saba parking app](#) (excluding AMEX), or search Saba parking app at the [App store](#) or [Google play](#).

Please note: due to current redevelopment works at St Albans, parking is very limited.

For more information about travelling to our sites and travel concessions, visit our [website](#).

PALS

Concerns, complaints or suggestions.

If you are unhappy with your experience or would like to give feedback, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). PALS is available to patients, relatives, carers and friends to raise concerns.

For more information, please scan the QR code or visit our [website](#).

If you need this leaflet in another **language, large print, Braille or audio version**, please call **01923 217198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net.



Language



Large Print



Braille



Audio

No smoking policy

We have a strict no smoking policy.

Smoking, including e-cigarettes is not permitted anywhere on any of the hospital sites.

Author / Position	Islay Lawton, Phlebotomy Manager
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Sustainability:

Please consider the environment before printing this leaflet.