

Patient information

Blood tests

Phlebotomy department

Where should I go for a blood test?

The Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow CM20 1QX

Located away from the main building in Gibberd Ward - Building 6. This is a stand-alone building behind William's Day Unit
Open 7am to 4.30pm. Monday to Friday (except bank holidays)

Herts & Essex Hospital, Bishop's Stortford CM23 5JH

Follow the corridor from the main entrance. Blood tests are located on the right opposite the outpatients' desk.
8.30am to 4.30pm. Monday to Friday (except bank holidays).

St. Margaret's Hospital, Epping CM16 6TN

Go into the outpatients' area, turn right and follow the corridor. 8am to 4pm. Monday to Friday (except bank holidays)

Arranging your appointment

You must book an appointment in advance.

We have launched an online blood test appointment system to improve patient experience.

The appointments system ensures that we can maximise the number of tests we can offer to patients.

Patients should visit www.pah.nhs.uk to book their appointments online, via the 'blood tests' page. The booking system – named Swiftqueue – is designed to be easy for patients to access and to manage their appointments. When accessing the Swiftqueue system, patients will be guided to create an account and follow the on-screen instructions to arrange their appointment.

Minimal information is required in order to set up an account and

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make an appointment. Patients will be asked to provide an email address (this does not need to be their own, it could be a friend, relative or carer who is assisting them, for example), their name and date of birth.

If patients arrive without a pre-booked appointment, they will be allocated the next available slot on arrival. This could be later in the day or a different day during busy times, so all appointments should be pre-booked online in advance.

If patients require any support with using the system, they can call **01279 827163** for advice. Alternatively, they can contact the PAHT pathology department on **01279 827030**.

Attendance: Where possible, patients will need to enter the departments on their own. Carers who are not required to assist the patient will be asked to wait outside.

Children 10 years of age or under

Appointments can only be made at The Princess Alexandra Hospital. We offer specific appointment times for children to minimise waiting times and to allow a managed time where two specially trained phlebotomists can deliver a high quality service.

Located within Gibberd ward as above, the children's clinic runs every Monday to Thursday between 8am and 11am.

Appointments should be made online.

What should I do if I need extra support?

If you feel you may need extra support when having your blood taken, please telephone **01279 827163**.

Some GP surgeries also offer a blood test service. Please contact your surgery for advice.

Why do I need a blood test?

A blood test is when a sample of blood is taken for testing in a laboratory. Blood tests have a wide range of uses and are one of the most common types of medical test.

What happens during a blood test?

The procedure is performed by a trained member of staff called a phlebotomist. An elasticated strap is placed around your arm, the area is sterilised, and a small needle attached to a syringe, is inserted into one of the blood vessels in the inside of your elbow or the back of your hand. You will feel a sharp scratch as the needle goes in but this shouldn't be too painful.

A sample of blood is then taken and the needle is removed. You will be given a pad to put pressure on the site of the injection, which stops any bleeding and should prevent bruising.

Most blood tests only take a few minutes to complete.

It is recommended to drink a large glass of water before you arrive.

What are the benefits of having a blood test?

A blood test can be used to:

- Assess your general state of health
- Confirm the presence of an infection
- See how well certain organs, such as the liver and kidneys, are working
- Screen for certain medical conditions

What do I need to know before I have a blood test?

Venipuncture (having a blood test) is a mildly invasive procedure that involves puncturing a vein to obtain blood and is not without risk.

It is common to have a small amount of bruising after the procedure, due to bleeding underneath the skin. This is normal and should resolve after a few days.

However, if the area becomes red or swollen seek advice from your GP.

Occasionally the arm may have a large area of bruising. This is usually due to insufficient pressure having been applied once the needle has been removed or through damage to the vein when the needle has been inserted due to fragile veins. Although this can be painful, it usually resolves itself within a few days. Patients taking anticoagulants are likely to bruise more easily.

Another complication of the procedure can be tendon or nerve damage, when access to the vein has been compromised

Please advise the phlebotomist if you feel any exceptional pain at the time of needle insertion and the procedure will be stopped immediately.

What should I expect after a blood test?

After the blood sample has been taken, it will be put into a bottle and labelled with your name. It will then be sent to a laboratory, where it will be examined.

The results are sent back to your GP or consultant, so you will need

to make a further appointment to get your results after approximately one week. The phlebotomy service does not receive results of patients' blood tests. They go to the health professional who requested the test so they can review the results.

If you have any questions about the procedure please ask the member of staff taking the sample.

If you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team on paht.pals@nhs.net or 01279 827211.

Please contact the communications team on paht.communications@nhs.net or 01279827926 if you would like this leaflet in another language or format.