



A guide to...

Blood Tests

Patient Information

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net



Language

Large
Print



Braille



Audio

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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.

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

The Swiftqueue system is very easy to use. Details on how to book appointments an appointment can be found [here](#).

Appointments will be available from 14 December 2023, registering on the system and telephoning for appointments will commence on 1 December.

For those unable to book online, telephone booking will be available Tuesday to Friday, between 9am and 1pm. Telephone: 01727 897 376.

The process

When you arrive at the Blood Clinic (phlebotomy department), please book in at the kiosk. The kiosk is easy to use and the instructions for this are by the machine. When your name shows on the calling screen, please go through to see the phlebotomist (the person who takes the blood sample).

Please note, the phlebotomist does not have any knowledge of your medical condition or the reasons for your blood test. Any questions about your condition should be discussed with your doctor.

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 some days, other clinics are operating 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

Children under five years-old can only be seen at the Peace Children's Centre.

To make an appointment online with Peach Children's Centre:

www.swiftqueue.co.uk/hertfordshire.php

Parents can book appointments for children aged 5-12 years old either at the trust or at the Peace Children's Centre.

Children's appointments on all three trust sites

Children aged 5 to 16 years old: Monday to Friday from opening time until 2.30pm.

Times when our Blood Clinics are open for appointments

Watford General Hospital

Monday to Friday, 7.30am - 4.30pm

Anticoagulation (Warfarin) clinics:

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday,
8am - 11.30am

Location

The blood clinic is on the ground floor of H Block (beside the Cardiac Centre, opposite Women and Children dept) [Map](#)

Watford General Hospital

Vicarage Road

Watford

Hertfordshire WD18 0HB

Tel:

01923 436334 (ext: 3210)

Hospital switchboard: 01923 244366

Hemel Hempstead Hospital

Marnham wing: all GP and
outpatients services

Monday to Friday: 8.30am - 4.30pm

Haematology clinic patients:

Verulam wing: by appointment letter only

Anticoagulation (Warfarin) clinics:

Verulam wing: Thursday and Friday, 8.30am -
11.30am

Hemel Hempstead Hospital

Hillfield Road

Hemel Hempstead

Hertfordshire HP2 4AD

Tel:

01442 287803

Hospital switchboard: 01442 213141

St Albans City Hospital

Monday, Thursday and Friday,

8am - 4pm

Tuesday and Wednesday:

8.30am - 4.30pm

Anticoagulation (Warfarin) clinics:

Tuesday and Wednesday:

8.30am - 11.30am

Location

The blood clinic is on level one of Gloucester wing.

St Albans City Hospital

Waverley Road

St Albans

Hertfordshire, AL3 5PN

Tel:

07727 897375/6

Hospital switchboard:

01727 866122

Further information

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 Thomas Sawyer Way, which leads to the car park, is WD18 0LT.

The ticket machines in the external car parks, including at Hemel Hempstead and St Albans **only accept cash**. However, you can pay by card using the Saba parking app at <https://www.sabaparking.co.uk/app> (excluding AMEX), or search Saba parking app at the [App store](#) or [Google play](#).

Please note that due to current redevelopment work, parking at St Albans is very limited.

See [here](#) for more information about travelling to and parking at our other sites, also travel concessions.

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.

Email: westherts.pals@nhs.net

Tel: **01923 217198**