

# HAVING A BLOOD TEST



## A GUIDE TO HAVING A BLOOD TEST FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

People First  
Speaking out in Merseyside

**Warning... this booklet contains pictures of needles and blood.**

# WHY DO I NEED A BLOOD TEST?

Blood tests are done for lots of reasons such as:

- To check you are well.
- To see if you have an infection.
- To check your medication is working.
- To check things like your kidneys or liver, are working well.

Your GP (doctor), or nurse says you need to have a **blood test**.

If you are very scared of needles or blood (have a **phobia**), you should tell the person who wants you to have the test.

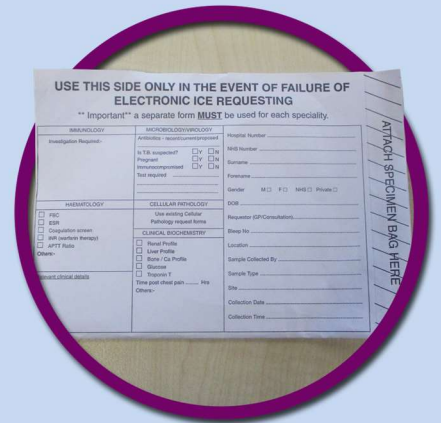
There are things that can be done to help you by making **reasonable adjustments** (see section at the end of this booklet).



A blood test should only take a few minutes. It can be done at your doctor's surgery, your local hospital or sometimes in your home.



You might be given a **blood form** or be sent one to your home. If so you will need to take it with you on the day of your blood test.



The person who wants you to have the blood test will tell you what to do and where you will need to go.



They will also tell you if you should take your **medication** and if you can **eat** and **drink** as normal before you have your test.





# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU HAVE A BLOOD TEST?

A **phlebotomist** (a person who is specially trained to take blood), doctor, or nurse will do your blood test.



You can take someone to **support** you, such as a family member or carer.



A blood test takes a small amount of blood from a **vein** where your arm bends in the middle or the back of your hand.



**Veins** are small thin tubes that carry blood around the body to the heart.



The person taking your blood will ask you your **name**, **date of birth** and **where you live** to check they have the right person.



You will be asked to roll up your sleeve (it might be easier to wear a **short sleeved** top).



A tight band (**tourniquet**) is put around your upper arm to make it easier to do the blood test.



The person taking the blood will feel your arm or back of your hand to find a **vein** to take the blood from.



Your skin will be **cleaned** with a small wipe and you may be asked to make a fist.



A **small needle** attached to a special **blood collecting tube holder** is used to take your blood.



The person taking your blood will **gently** put the needle into the vein; try to keep as still as you can.



The person doing your blood test will tell you when the needle is about to go in.

If you **don't want to know** when the needle is about to go in, tell the person doing your blood test.

Some people find it better to **look away** or **close their eyes** when having the test done. You can do this if you want.

It might **sting** a bit when the needle goes in but it should not hurt.

While the needle is in your vein, a **small tube** will be put into the **special holder** which collects the blood needed to be tested.

A **small amount** of blood is collected in each tube (you might need more than one tube).

When enough blood is taken, the **tight band** around your arm will be taken off.





The needle will be taken out of your vein and a piece of **cotton wool** or **swab** will be pressed onto where the needle went in.



You will be asked to **press** on the cotton wool or swab for a few minutes to stop any bleeding.



The person who took the blood will **check** that the tiny hole where the needle went in has stopped bleeding.



A fresh piece of cotton wool or gauze will be **taped** over the place the needle went in. You can take this off after about 20 minutes.



You might feel a bit **dizzy** or **lightheaded** during or after the blood test. **You must tell the person doing your blood test straight away if you do.**



The blood test is now done. If you feel okay you can leave and carry on your day as normal.



You may get a bruise where the needle went into your vein which can feel sore. This is normal and the bruise should fade and feel better over the next few days.



Blood test results take about a week. If you have not heard from your doctor you should ring them to check everything is okay.



Your doctor might get in touch with you sooner if they need to talk to you about the blood test results.





# WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW FOR HAVING MY BLOOD TEST?

Why do I need a blood test?

Do I agree (**consent**) to have a blood test?

What could happen if I don't have the blood test?

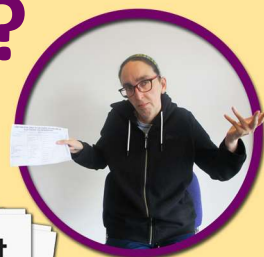
What date and time is my blood test?

Where do I go to have my blood test and how will I get there?

Will I need someone with me to support me to have my blood test? If so who?

Can I eat and drink as normal on the day of the test?

Can I take my usual medication on the day of the test?



# REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

If you are very scared of needles or blood (have a phobia), you should tell the person who wants you to have your blood test **before** you go for it.

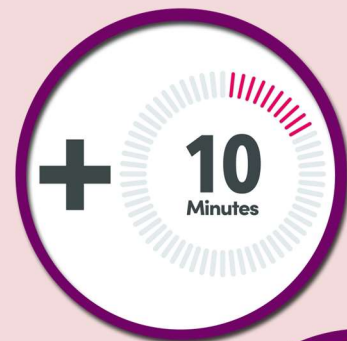


Lots of things can be done to help you to have your blood test by making '**reasonable adjustments**'. This means finding a different way to do something to make it easier.



Examples of **reasonable adjustments** are:

- A longer appointment time.
- Having a friend, family member or carer with you while you have your blood test done.
- Cream to numb the skin so you don't feel the needle.



- Asking for the person taking your blood test to be a male or female if that is what you would prefer.



- Asking for the person taking the blood to wear normal clothes if you are scared of people in a uniform.



- Being able to listen to your favourite music while you are having your blood test.



- Having your blood test at your home if you are scared of hospitals.



- Time to be made familiar with the process and equipment so you are less frightened. This is called **desensitisation**.



**If you have any questions about having your blood test or feel you need any reasonable adjustments, please contact your Community Learning Disability Team (numbers are on the back page).**



# COMMUNITY LEARNING DISABILITY TEAMS

Sefton:

2nd Floor, The Hesketh Centre,  
51-55 Albert Road, Southport, PR8 0LT  
Telephone: 01704 383 030 or 01704 383 114



Liverpool:

Mersey Care NHS Trust Community Hub,  
Falklands Approach, Norris Green, Liverpool,  
L11 5BS  
Telephone: 0151 737 4800



Knowsley/St Helens:

Willis House, 23 Cumber Lane, Whiston, L35 2YZ  
Telephone: 0151 426 5885



Halton:

Bridges Learning Centre, Crow Wood Health Park,  
Crow Wood Lane, Widnes, WA8 3LZ  
Telephone: 0151 351 8899



Warrington:

Wakefield House, Warrington Hospital, Guardian  
Street, Warrington, WA5 1UD  
Telephone: 01925 664 444



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