

## Arm Care

### Thank you for coming to donate today

**NHS Blood and Transplant is dependent upon volunteers to generously give blood for the benefit of others.**

During your assessment, our staff will assess and choose the best vein for venepuncture. In case of a failed venepuncture, it is NHSBT policy not to attempt a second venepuncture on a less suitable vein. This is in the interest of safety of all our donors. As you read in the Donor Consent Information Leaflet, there are risks associated with blood donation. Our staff minimise these risks by selecting an appropriate vein.

### Vein assessment

Although you may have been able to have blood tests taken easily at your doctors or the hospital, we use a larger needle which is in the vein for longer to obtain a full donation and this may mean your veins aren't suitable for blood donation. Sometimes it is necessary to advise donors that they should not become a blood donor or to no longer give blood. We would like to stress this decision is not taken lightly and is made after considering all factors involved. Thank you for giving up your time to come along. You could still support us by encouraging others to donate.

### Bruising

Occasionally bruising of the arm may develop. The bruise may look dramatic and some people can find this worrying, especially if it appears away from the donation area. Bruises are usually harmless and will disappear with time and it is normal for them to spread out before fading.

If you do develop a bruise the following advice may also help.

**Rest** – allow time for the arm to heal, avoid heavy lifting, e.g. at the gym or carrying heavy shopping. Light gentle movement is recommended. After 36 hours, return to normal activity.

**Ice** – This is most effective immediately for swelling of the bruise and surrounding area. Do not place directly onto the skin; use a cloth to act as a barrier to prevent freeze-burns, e.g. pack of frozen vegetables or an ice pack.

**Compression** – pressing on the point where the needle was inserted.

**Elevation** – If possible, when resting elevate your arm on a pillow.

Treatment for the bruise is most effective whilst the bruise is still reddish, however after 36 hours – heat in the form of a warm cloth to be applied to the bruise for approximately 10 minutes, 2-3 times a day may increase blood flow to the bruised area allowing the skin to reabsorb the bruise more quickly – ultimately the bruise will fade in colour.

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## Arm Pain - Suspected Tendon/Nerve Injury

At some point during your donation you informed staff of pain or discomfort in your donation arm, hand or fingers. This may be related to possible tendon/nerve injury, which, as you will have read in the Donor Consent Information Leaflet, are uncommon risks associated with venepuncture.

We advise that you avoid heavy lifting and strenuous activity, DO NOT immobilise your arm as this could cause further complications – gentle exercise will aid your recovery.

If your symptoms do not fully resolve at session a member of our Clinical Support Team will contact you in the next 1-3 days to check progress, explore any persistent issues and provide advice. However, if you experience any of the following please contact us, visit your GP or attend a Walk-in Centre to gain medical assistance as early as possible.

- Stiffness, weakness or a dull ache in the arm.
- Pain that gets significantly worse when you move the affected arm.
- Severe or worsening pins and needles.
- Severe or worsening swelling or the development of a lump in the arm.
- Redness and/or inflammation of the donation arm.
- Change of skin temperature or colour to your donation arm or hand.

If you require pain relief take paracetamol (according to manufacturer's instructions) but avoid aspirin and ibuprofen for the first 24 hours.

## Further information

If you are worried or require further information you can obtain advice by ringing our donor helpline on 0300 123 23 23, NHS helpline 111 or contact your GP.

## NHS Blood and Transplant

NHS Blood and Transplant saves and improves lives by providing a safe, reliable, and efficient supply of blood and associated services to the NHS in England. We are the organ donor organisation for the UK and responsible for matching and allocating donated organs. We rely on thousands of members of the public who voluntarily donate their blood, organs, tissues, and stem cells. Thank you very much for your time and support and although we have advised you not to donate, you may still be able to help patients by encouraging others to become blood donors.

For more information, visit [nhsbt.nhs.uk](https://nhsbt.nhs.uk)

Call **0300 123 23 23**