

Therapeutic Phlebotomy

Therapeutic phlebotomy is a procedure where blood is removed from your body. Your provider will order the amount of blood to be removed based on the reason for the procedure. It is a lot like donating blood.

Purpose of the Treatment

It is used to treat certain disease. It can:

- Remove extra red blood cells.
- Remove extra iron in the blood.
- Remove unusual shaped red blood cells.

Side Effects

- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Fainting
- Low blood pressure
- Soreness, redness, burning or pain where the needle was placed
- Bruising where needle was placed
- Nausea and vomiting

Getting Ready

- Eat before your treatment
- Drink 8-10 (8 oz) glasses of fluid the day before
- Tell your provider if you are taking any blood thinning medicines

During Treatment

- Drink fluids (juice or soda with sugar is best)
- Remain seated or laying down
- Let your nurse know if you are having any side effects

After Treatment

Dizziness: Do **not** change positions too fast. If you get up too quickly, you may feel dizzy, lightheaded, or faint. If this happens,

sit down right away, and put your head between your knees or lay down with your legs higher than your head until your symptoms improve. If you keep feeling dizzy or lightheaded, tell your doctor or nurse.

Bandage: Keep this on for at least 1 hour.

Bleeding at the site: If you have bleeding at the site, raise your arm over your head and apply pressure for 5 to 10 minutes. If you are still bleeding after 10 minutes, contact the clinic who performed the treatment right away.

Bruising: Apply ice for 20 minutes, 2-3 times per day for bruising.

Fluids: Drink plenty of fluids for the next 24 hours. Your urine should be clear or pale yellow. **Do not** drink alcohol.

Activity: Avoid heavy exercise and lifting for at up to 24 hours after treatment.

Diet: Eat well balanced meals for the next 24 hours.

Smoking: If you smoke, you should avoid smoking for at least 1 hour after treatment.

When to Call

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Bleeding from the site that does not stop after applying pressure
- Redness, warmth or pain at the site
- Unexpected side effects, questions or concerns

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 2/2025. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5524.