




# Giving a Blood Sample: Frequently Asked Questions



The NatCen survey nurses follow 'best practice' principles which meet current national standards used within the NHS.

This leaflet gives answers to some of the questions people often ask about giving a blood sample.

If you have any further queries, please ask the NatCen survey nurse.

### **Why do you need to take a blood sample?**

The analysis of the blood samples will tell us a lot about the health of the general population. It is an important addition to the information you have already given us.

### **What about hygiene standards?**

The survey nurses maintain the highest hygiene standards to reduce any risk of infection. We use a new sterile needle and tubes for every person.

### **Is any special equipment needed?**

Before a needle is inserted into your vein, the survey nurse will apply a tourniquet (a band put round your arm to control your blood flow). This keeps more blood in the vein, making it easier for the nurse to see and access it.

### **Does it hurt?**

Blood sampling may cause some discomfort. Very rarely, you may feel a stronger sensation. Please tell the nurse immediately if you are at all concerned.

### **What if I feel faint?**

Anyone might feel faint during or immediately after giving a blood sample, although most people don't. If you begin to feel faint at all, tell the nurse as soon as possible, if you can. The nurse will be watching you for any signs of fainting, and if necessary will stop taking the blood sample.

If you actually faint, which can happen but is very unlikely, you will be advised not to drive for at least 30 minutes once you have come round.

### **How long should I keep the dressing on afterwards?**

The nurse will apply a dressing after taking the sample. You should leave this dressing on for at least 30 minutes after the blood sample has been taken.

### **Will I get a bruise?**


Bruising occurs when blood leaks from a vein into the surrounding tissues. The nurse will make every attempt to reduce bruising through applying pressure to the affected vein after taking the blood sample. However, bruising does sometimes occur. This may be slightly uncomfortable for a day or so after giving the sample but usually no action is required. If it gets worse (for example if the bruise hurts more or gets much bigger), you should seek further help, for instance from your GP or NHS Direct.


### **Should I avoid any activities after giving the sample?**

To reduce any risk of bruising, where possible we suggest you avoid any heavy lifting or strenuous exercise for the rest of the day you give your blood sample.

### **Will I get any results from my blood sample?**

The sample that you give us will be sent to a secure storage facility. Once the sample is stored, the sample becomes confidential and it is not possible to identify an individual from the blood sample. This means that we are unable to send individuals any results from their sample.





If you experience any of the following, you should seek further help, for instance from your GP or NHS Direct:

- severe pain
- numbness or persistent 'pins and needles' in the arm, hand or fingers
- swelling which is large or increasing in size
- painful redness/inflammation.

If you have any further queries contact NatCen on 0800 526 397 during office hours.

National Centre for Social Research  
Kings House, 101-131 Kings Road  
Brentwood  
Essex, CM14 4LX