

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Is this service only for housebound patients only?**

No. This service is all about your convenience. It prevents the need for you to travel to an NHS community centre or an NHS hospital to have your blood test taken. No more looking for parking, taking a ticket and waiting for your blood test! Our phlebotomist comes to your house and takes your bloods at a time that is convenient for you.

If you are a housebound patient, you should speak with your GP about arranging a district nurse to visit you at home to take your blood test on the NHS for free.

### **Do you do fasting blood tests & how long do I need to fast for?**

Yes. Some blood tests require you to be fasting and your GP will indicate this to you at the time they give you the form or it will be ticked as fasting.

Usually a 12 hour fast is required prior to the blood test with nothing to eat or drink. It is acceptable to drink water right up until your test and you can take your medications if required.

### **Can all blood tests be done by 'Blood Tests at Home'? How about drug levels?**

We can usually most blood tests that your GP will request however there are a few rare tests that we cannot do and your GP should inform you that those will need to be carried out at the hospital.

Tests that cannot be done include: (although these are RARELY requested by a GP)

Renin; Aldosterone; Parathyroid (PTH); Insulin; C-Peptide; Gastrin; Calcitonin; Homocysteine; Lactate; Ammonia; Vasopressin; Cryoglobulin; IGF-1; Vitamin A/B1/B2/B6/E; Chromosomes; TPMT

Drug levels such as Digoxin levels should be taken 6-8 hours after you have taken your digoxin dose. Iron levels should ideally be taken without having taken any iron tablets for 24 hours prior to your test. Lithium levels should be taken 12 hours after the last dose. For any other drug levels, please ensure you check with your GP about the correct time of taking the blood test to check drug levels.

### **Do you do children's blood tests?**

Yes. We do blood tests on all ages however we do ask you to note that in babies and children the technique of holding them is vital to achieving a successful sample. We are in the process of creating some short clips to demonstrate how to hold the children still. We also require a second person to

assist you to help, as some children can be very strong. Correct restraining of the child/baby will mean less pain and distress to the child/baby and a smoother collecting of the required quantity of blood.

On some occasions if a first attempt has failed we reserve the right to refuse a second attempt, as the phlebotomist may feel a second attempt be better done in the hospital environment.

### **Do you numb the skin before a blood test?**

For young children, some people wish to use Emla cream that numbs the skin before the needle is placed in the vein. We cannot apply it at the time of the test as it is recommended to apply the cream 60 mins before the blood test. For those who wish to use it, apply the cream to the front of the elbow (antecubital fossa) of both arms about 1 hour before the due appointment time. The cream is held in place with a clear dressing.

Please note that the child may still be distressed due to the anticipation of the test and the restraining process. Firmly holding the child is still the best way to achieving a successful sample with or without Emla cream.

The cream can be purchased at most pharmacies.

### **What happens if there is a problem collecting the blood?**

In some instances, it is difficult to collect the blood in enough quantities to analyse. This can happen if for example a child is wriggling too much, or a needle phobic patient is unable to hold still, or infrequently due to veins being too small to collect enough blood.

If this is the case, the phlebotomist will indicate this to yourself and mention this in her report, so the management team at 'Blood Tests at Home' are aware that the bloods were unable to be collected or may be reported by the laboratory as insufficient.

If this is the case, please contact us at 'Blood Tests at Home' and we can discuss the next steps.

### **What if I am told by my doctor that the bloods were reported as 'insufficient'? What does it mean?**

All the blood test tubes have a marking which gives us an indication of how much is required for a certain test to be analysed. Occasionally the test can still be analysed on a lesser quantity.

Occasionally the labs will report a sample to be 'insufficient' meaning not enough blood was in the tube to be able to analyse it accurately. It could be that not enough blood was taken at the time of the blood test or that some spillage may have occurred at the lab. This could happen with any blood taking service, NHS or Private, and unfortunately in this circumstance, the blood test will need to be repeated.

### **Will I get a refund if the bloods were 'insufficient'?**

We reserve the right to refuse a refund as it is possible that the fault may lie with the laboratory due to spillage. However, as a gesture of goodwill, we usually offer a re-attempt at taking the blood on one more occasion without further charge OR we may offer a 50% refund if you request no further attempts. No refund will be available if you request a re-attempt, and this also fails or is insufficient.

Of note, if the initial blood test was an off-peak blood test, we will only be able to offer a re-attempt in available off-peak appointments.

### **When will the results come back?**

Usually the results will go back to your GP within 3-5 working days although some blood tests do take longer to analyse.

### **What if the results are not with my GP after 5 working days?**

Once we have taken the bloods and delivered them to the hospital, we cannot take responsibility for the results reaching your GP. If your blood results are not back with your GP, please ask the secretary to speak with the lab and find out if there is a problem. Occasionally the reports are awaiting verification by the senior lab staff before they are sent to the GP leading to a delay in the process.

### **Can I have blood tests done privately if I do not have a form from my GP?**

Yes. We have access to a private laboratory in London and we can arrange most blood tests. The charge for taking the blood is the same as if you have a form from your GP, however, the analysis of the bloods incurs additional charges depending on which tests you request. If you would like to discuss what tests can be carried out, please contact our team and we can create a tailored package of blood tests depending on your requirement. The reports will be sent confidentially to you by email.

### **Can I cancel my blood test appointment?**

You cannot cancel an appointment within 24 hours of your appointment as the phlebotomist's time would have been reserved for you.

If you contact us with more than 24 hours notice, we can reschedule your appointment to a different available date and time, but we cannot offer a refund.

### **Can I pay by cash?**

We require payment at the time of booking the appointment either by card or by bank transfer within 24 hours of the appointment. This ensures your slot is confirmed. We cannot accept cash payment at the time of the appointment.

### **Why is the cost for a 'Peak Blood Test' £35 and an 'Off Peak Blood Test' £25?**

As with any business, our costs reflect our expenses. Peak blood tests are offered in unsociable hours and due to local traffic at these times, it takes the phlebotomists longer to travel from house to house. The other major costs in order for us to provide a high quality service which ensures your safety includes carrying out annual DBS checks on our staff, medical indemnity and appropriate insurances for our phlebotomists and registration with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Registration with the CQC is a requirement of every healthcare provider and ensures your safety by interrogating our processes to ensure your up most safety and ensure quality of service is at high standard.