

Phlebotomists, though very skilled, are not medically qualified. They will not be able to answer questions about your medical condition. If you have any queries about your health, please ask your family doctor who will have your medical notes.

What happens to my blood samples?

Your blood samples will be sent to a central specimen reception area within the laboratory at The Royal Berkshire Hospital. They will be labelled with unique bar codes to identify them and link them with the personal details from your request card that we will enter on our computer.

Within this pathology laboratory we have nearly 80 biomedical scientists and laboratory aides working on blood samples alone. Each day we receive over 2,500 blood samples.

Many other types of samples are received for bacterial, biochemical, and/or histological examination. A similar number of scientific staff work on these.

We receive samples from the wards, clinics and family doctors as well as our own phlebotomy clinics.

Many of these samples will have several tests done on them. Some samples will be sent to specialist centres elsewhere for analysis.

When will I get my results?

It is impossible to give an exact time as it depends on which tests have been requested - some tests will be done the same day. Others will take longer and may only be done in batches once or twice a week. Results from those blood samples that are sent to other hospitals may take time to return to us.

All samples will be dealt with as quickly as possible and results sent to the doctor who requested the tests. They will be sent by post but now our computer also sends many results electronically. Your doctor will be able to tell you when he expects the results.

Please do not telephone the Pathology Laboratory for results. We are not allowed to give these to anyone other than your doctor.

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust
London Road
Reading RG1 5AN
0118 322 5111
www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

PATH_1159
Pathology department, Aug 2004
Revised Aug 2014
Review due: Aug 2016

What happens
when you have
a blood test

Blood tests are taken for many different reasons, e.g. to help diagnose or rule out conditions, to monitor your health, to check the body's functions or to check your blood group.

The person who requests the blood test will write on the form which tests they want the laboratory to do.

Where can I have a blood test?

You can have blood taken on weekdays at:
The Royal Berkshire Hospital Pathology department – between 7.30am and 4.15pm.

To make things easier for you, the Pathology department has two locations in the hospital that you can visit - on Level 2 near Outpatients 2 in South Block; or in the Concourse on Level 2 of Centre Block.

The Royal Berkshire Bracknell Clinic – between 8.00am and 4.00pm.

You do not need an appointment to have blood taken. Just come along to the hospital during the times stated above. Please be sure to bring the request card, which your doctor gave you when asking for a blood test. If you are a Warfarin patient you will need your anticoagulant Monitoring Service

Request form, from your blue dosing letter instead.

Your doctor may tell you that you must fast before your blood test. This means you must not eat any food or drink anything other than water for twelve hours before you have your blood test. You must not even have a cup of tea or coffee.

Patients who are fasting come first thing in the morning for their blood test. If you are not fasting, come later in the day for your test, as we are less busy then.

When you arrive at the Pathology department, please take a number and find a seat. If you have an urgent test please wait for a phlebotomist to see you.

If you are deaf or hard of hearing please tell us so we can make sure you do not miss your turn.

We always try to attend to patients in the order they arrive – first come, first served.

However, at The Royal Berkshire Hospital, patients with urgent blood test requests where the results are required for an appointment elsewhere in the hospital on the same day will have priority.

Whilst you are waiting, please take off your coat or jacket as this will save time.

When you are called you will be taken into a room by the phlebotomist (blood collector) to have blood taken.

Having blood taken

Usually, you will sit in a chair for this but if you are nervous about needles or feel you might faint, please tell us. It might be better for you to lie on the couch while we take blood.

It is helpful if you wear short-sleeved tops when coming for a blood test, as you will have to expose an arm. You can always slip off your top if necessary.

The phlebotomist will ask you to grip a small baton and may put a tourniquet (an elastic strap) around your upper arm. This will make it easier to obtain blood.

The phlebotomists are well trained and very skilled in taking blood so it is usually a relatively quick and painless procedure. It is not unusual to have a small amount of bruising following a blood test. This will fade quickly and is nothing to worry about.