

Platelet function tests

Information for parents and
carers

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Why does my child need to have a platelet function test?

Platelet function testing is a specialised test to show how well platelets (a certain type of blood cell) are performing in the blood clotting system. The doctors may ask for this test if they think that your child's platelets are not functioning properly. This is usually because your child or a member of your family has a history of abnormal bleeding or bruising.

Platelet function testing is usually performed alongside other specialist blood tests to look at other parts of the clotting system in detail.

How is the test performed?

- The platelet function test will be arranged for a separate day from your child's clinic appointment. This is because the clotting laboratory requires advance notice to arrange the special test.
- In order to perform the test we need to take a blood sample from a small vein in your child's arm. This is similar to a standard blood test except that a slightly larger volume of blood is taken. To do this, we use a small needle. Occasionally it may take more than one attempt to obtain the correct amount of blood for the test.
- When the platelet function test is arranged, you will be given an appointment for your child to come and have the blood test. This will be at the Haemophilia Centre at Evelina London Children's Hospital. In most cases, the appointment will be between 10am and 10.30am and will last for about half an hour.

- The results will be discussed at your child's follow-up appointment at the Haemophilia Centre.

How to prepare for the test

Platelet function testing is extremely sensitive to any factors that interfere with how platelets work. In order for us to see if there are any problems in the way your child's platelets are working, it is important we eliminate these factors before the platelet function test is performed.

Certain medicines may affect your child's platelets. This includes both prescription medicines and medicines that are bought over the counter (including herbal and alternative medicines). **It is essential that you let our staff know about any medicines and supplements that your child is taking.**

There are a number of medicines that may affect the platelet function test. Some of the more common ones include:

- drugs used to treat or prevent heart disease or stroke – for example aspirin, clopidogrel, dipyridamole
- anti-inflammatory drugs – for example ibuprofen, diclofenac, naproxen, indomethacin
- blood pressure medicines
- some antibiotics
- some antihistamines
- some antidepressants
- some herbal/alternative medicines (for example Chinese black tree fungus).

Certain foods, drinks and dietary supplements may also affect platelets, for example alcohol, caffeine, garlic, ginger, pineapple and fish oils.

The doctor will give you specific information about which medicines your child will need to stop before the test, and when to stop them. **Please do not stop any of your child's regular medication until you have discussed this with the doctor at the Haemophilia Centre.** In most cases you will be asked to discontinue your child's non-essential prescription medication and to avoid over-the-counter medication for at least two weeks before the platelet function test.

It is important that your child drinks plenty of water the morning before their test.

Are there any side-effects?

Just like any blood test, taking blood for platelet function testing can sometimes leave a small bruise at the site where the sample was taken.

Questions about the platelet function test?

If you have any questions about the platelet function test, the doctor or nurse at the Haemophilia Centre will be able to help. If you have a question about the arrangements for the blood test or any medication that may interfere with the test, please contact the staff at the Haemophilia Centre. If your question can't be answered immediately then one of our doctors or nurses will call you back.

Notes

Useful sources of information

The Haemophilia Society

UK charity for anyone with a bleeding disorder.

t: 0800 018 6068 (helpline)

e: info@haemophilia.org.uk

w: www.haemophilia.org.uk

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm

e: letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

Contact us

Haemophilia Centre for children, Evelina London Children's Hospital:

t: 020 7188 7545 (secretary)

t: 020 7188 4704 (nurses)

Haemophilia Centre for adults, St Thomas' Hospital:

t: 020 7188 2807 or 020 7188 2781 (reception)

t: 020 7188 2790 (nurses)

Out of hours and emergencies:

Please call the hospital switchboard, **t:** 020 7188 7188, and ask for 'haematology doctor on call for haemophilia'.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Leaflet number: 4040/VER2

Date published: November 2018

Review date: November 2021

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A list of sources is available on request