

WHAT IS VENESECTION?

Venesection (also called therapeutic blood removal or therapeutic phlebotomy) is a procedure where a small amount of blood is removed from your vein, similar to a blood donation. This helps lower the number of red blood cells or iron in your body. It is commonly used to manage:

- Haemochromatosis (too much iron in the body)
- Polycythaemia vera (too many red blood cells)
- Other conditions where blood removal improves health.

WHY DO I NEED THIS PROCEDURE?

Venesection helps:

- Reduce iron levels in the body
- Improve blood flow by thinning the blood
- Prevent long-term complications such as liver damage, heart problems, or blood clots.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE PROCEDURE?

- You will be seated or lying down
- A nurse or doctor inserts a needle into a vein in your arm
- Around 350–500ml of blood is removed (similar to a blood donation)
- The procedure takes about 15–30 minutes depending on many factors
- A band-aid/dressing is applied to your arm afterwards.

HOW TO PREPARE

- Eat and drink normally before your appointment (do not fast)
- Drink plenty of water (2–3 glasses) beforehand
- Avoid alcohol for 24 hours before and after
- Take your usual medications unless advised otherwise.

AFTER THE PROCEDURE

- Wait in the waiting room for 5-10 mins after procedure
- You may feel tired or lightheaded — this is normal
- Rest for the day and avoid heavy exercise/lifting.
- Drink plenty of fluids and have a good meal
- Keep your band-aid/dressing on for at least 2 hours
- You may notice a small bruise at the needle site

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Most people tolerate venesection well. Sometimes, you may experience:

- Dizziness or fainting
- Bruising at the needle site
- Mild fatigue for 24–48 hours.

Rare complications include infection at the needle site or excessive bleeding.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Call your doctor or go to the nearest emergency department if you notice:

- Persistent dizziness, fainting, or chest pain
- Excessive bleeding that does not stop
- Redness, swelling, heat or pus at the needle site.

FOLLOW-UP CARE

- Your doctor will tell you how often you need venesection
- At first, you may need it weekly, later less often
- Regular blood tests will monitor your progress.

OUR LOCATION

San GP Centre (within Sydney Adventist Hospital)
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REFERENCES

1. Australian Red Cross Lifeblood – Therapeutic Venesection. Available at www.lifeblood.com.au
2. Better Health Channel (Victoria State Government) – Venesection. Available at www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
3. British Society for Haematology – Guidelines on the management of polycythaemia vera and haemochromatosis.